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BOOKS FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

Edited by the

REV. ARTHUR E. GREGORY

PRINCIPAL OF THE CHILDREN'S HOME

PALESTINE

IN GEOGRAPHY AND IN HISTORY

BY

ARTHUR WILLIAM COOKE, M.A.

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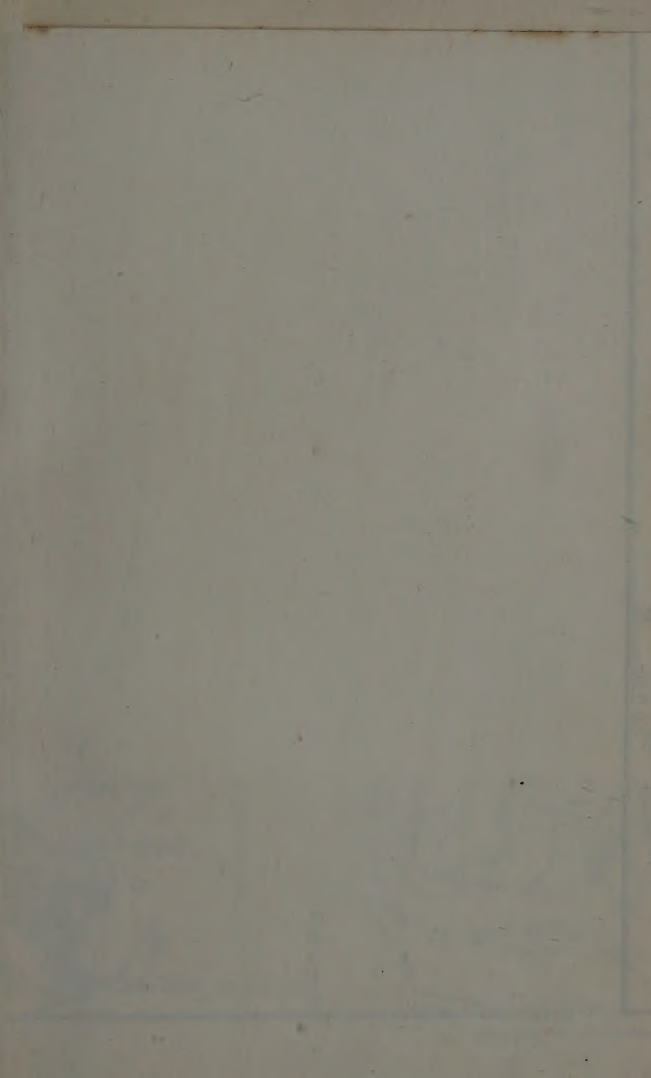
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November 1900.



PALESTINE.

Scale 1:1,500,000 (24 Stat. Miles - lin.)

0 10 20 30 40 Stat. Miles

Old Hebrew Names are written thus:—Shechem.
Greco-Latin Names are placed within brackets.
Periodical Streams are distinguished by a broken line.
— Old Roman Roads. — Railways. Nahr—Perennial
Rivers. W. (Wady) = Valley. Jebel = Mountain.

- Lowland below the Level of the Sea.
- Lowland up to 300 ft.
- Shallow Sea down to 600 ft.



ANCIENT JERUSALEM

Scale 1:25,000.



PALESTINE

IN GEOGRAPHY AND IN HISTORY

BY

ARTHUR WILLIAM COOKE, M.A.

WITH TOPOGRAPHICAL INDEX AND MAPS

VOLUME I

London:

CHARLES H. KELLY

2, CASTLE ST., CITY RD.; AND 26, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1901

P R E F A C E

THIS Handbook has been written for the help of Bible readers and students who desire to form a clear picture of the country in which most of the events about which they read occurred. It is an attempt to enable them to follow the narratives in the Old and New Testaments, with their eyes upon the actual scenery. First of all, a careful description of Palestine as a whole is given, stress being laid upon those natural features which have been determining factors in its history. Then follows a brief account of the earliest inhabitants of the land, of the coming and settlement of Israel and of the history of the later invasions. These general chapters prepare the way for a detailed survey of the principal divisions of the country, with careful geographical and historical sketches of each province or district and its important sites. The reader is strongly advised to make

constant use of the Maps with which the volumes are furnished.

The author wishes to disclaim any attempt at originality of treatment or of arrangement. His aim has been simply to bring the latest results of Palestinian research within the reach of readers who have neither time nor opportunity to consult the larger works for themselves. The historical matter of the volumes is drawn chiefly from the Old and New Testaments, the Apocrypha and the Histories of Josephus. The geographical descriptions are based principally upon the Memoirs, Quarterly Statements, Maps and other publications of the English Palestine Exploration Fund, and Dr. George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, the most learned and valuable recent contribution to the subject. Frequent use has also been made of Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, Henderson's *Palestine: its Historical Geography*, Socin's *Palestine and Syria* (Baedeker), Merrill's *Galilee in the Time of Christ*, and the many valuable books of Colonel Conder. For the historical discussions, the works of Kittel, Graetz, Schürer, Wellhausen and Ewald have been chiefly consulted. Limitations of space have forbidden the introduction of full detailed references. A few, however, of the more important have been given, and the

reader is referred to the Topographical Index, at the end of vol. ii., for the Scripture passages upon which the account of each place in the text is based. A few references will be found in the footnotes to the geographical and historical articles in Dr. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (vols. i., ii. and iii.), which contain the very latest conclusions of Palestinian experts.

The author desires in conclusion to acknowledge, with thanks, the constant help of his wife and the valuable assistance of the Rev. Arthur E. Gregory, General Editor of the Series, without which the book would have suffered considerably in accuracy of detail.

A. W. C.

LONDON,
November 1900.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



A. V., R. V.	=	Authorised Version, Revised Version.
<i>Antiq.</i>	=	<i>Antiquities</i> (of Josephus).
D. B.	=	<i>Dictionary of the Bible</i> , edited by Dr. Hastings.
f., ff.	=	and following verse or page, and following verses or pages.
G. A. S.	=	Dr. G. A. Smith's <i>Historical Geography of the Holy Land</i> .
Jos.	=	Josephus.
LXX	=	The Septuagint.
Mem.	=	Memoirs of.
MS., MSS.	=	Manuscript, Manuscripts.
n.	=	note.
N.P.	=	<i>Names and Places in the O.T. and N.T.</i> (P.E.F.).
O.T., N.T.	=	Old Testament, New Testament.
P.E.F.	=	Palestine Exploration Fund.
Q.St.	=	Quarterly Statement.

MEANING OF ARABIC TERMS



Ain	= spring.	Makt	= makhadet or ford.
Arak	= cliff.	Mar	= saint.
Bahr	= sea.	Meidan	= plain or open space.
Ballut	= oak.	Mejdel	= watch-tower.
Beit	= house.	Merj	= meadow.
Bir	= well.	Mineh	= harbour.
Birket	= artificial pool.	Mugharah	= cave.
Burj	= tower.	Nahr	= river.
Deir	= convent.	Neby	= prophet.
Harām	= sacred enclosure.	Nukb	= pass.
Haud	= reservoir.	Ras	= head or cape.
Hosn	= fortress.	Sahel	= plain.
Jebel	= mountain.	Talat	= mountain or ra- vine pathway.
Jisr	= bridge.	Tell	= mound.
Kal'at	= castle.	Tor	= isolated moun- tain.
Kefr	= village.	Wady	= watercourse.
Keniseh	= church.	Wely	= tomb of Mos- lem saint.
Khan	= inn.		
Kh.	= khurbet or ruin.		
Kubr	= tomb.		
Kurm	= vineyard.		
Kurn	= horn or peak.		
Kusr	= tower.		

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ARMENIA
with
ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, SYRIA &c.
in the Patriarchal Ages.
BY W. HUGHES WILKS.

BOOK I
PALESTINE AS A WHOLE

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CHAPTER I

ITS GEOGRAPHY

A LONG the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea runs a narrow strip of mountainous country which serves as a barrier between the sea and the great desert of Western Asia. This desert, consisting for the most part of high barren tableland, is only relieved by occasional oases and by a very few fertile tracts, chief among which are the Valley of the Euphrates on the north-east, the Nile Valley on the north-west, and the narrow band of hilly country along the Mediterranean shore just referred to, known to the Greeks as 'Syria,' a shortened form of the longer 'Assyria.' Syria's fertility was due to the fact that the prevailing westerly winds, laden with moisture, broke upon the long mountain ranges, and during the winter season drenched the whole country with rain. Syria of the *A.V.*, the Hebrew 'Aram,' included Northern Mesopotamia, the country west of the Euphrates



as far as Phœnicia, and the district around Damascus. Its inhabitants were mainly of the Semitic stock and spoke Aramaic, while the different districts of the country were distinguished by special titles, such as Aram-naharaim, Paddan-aram, Aram-rehob, Aram-maacah, and Aram-Zobah. But the Syria of *modern geography* is the region between the Taurus Mountains in the north and the Sinaitic Peninsula in the south, lying from 70 to 100 miles broad between the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the edge of the Arabian Desert on the east. This stretch of country, known to the Egyptians as Upper and Lower Rutennu (or Lutennu), was called by the Arabs Esh-sham (= 'the left'), in distinction from El-Yemen (= 'the right'), their name for all the southern region of Arabia.

Palestine.

Palestine, the land which will be described in the following pages, constituted the southern half of modern Syria, the portion extending from the Nahr Kasimiyeh in the north to the neighbourhood of Beersheba in the south. The name 'Palestina,' due originally to the Greeks, is simply another form of 'Philistina,' by extension to the whole country from the small tract along the seacoast, in the south, which was conquered and inhabited by the Philistine

invaders. The full name was Syria Palaistiné. Names of the land. Then the noun was dropped and the adjective used alone in its Roman form of Palestina. An older native name for the land is *Canaan*, originally applied to the 'lowlands' along the Mediterranean shore, inhabited by the Phœnicians, and thence extended first to the Jordan Valley, and afterwards to cover the whole country, both mountain and valley, west of the Jordan. In the Tell-el-Amarna tablets the name *Kinakhna* occurs. The Egyptians included the northern half of Palestine under the name of *Khal*, while the southern half, particularly the lower-lying district towards the seacoast, was called *Zahi*. The later names '*Land of Israel*,' '*Land of Promise*,' '*Holy Land*,' explain themselves.

A glance at the map will show the relation of Palestine to the surrounding countries and nations, particularly Arabia, Egypt, and Assyria. Relation of Palestine to Arabia. With the wide-stretching desert of Arabia on the east and south-east, the connection was always close, and almost invariably fraught with the same historical results. The cool, fertile uplands on both sides of the Jordan Valley offered attractive pasture-grounds to the wandering desert tribes, while those on the west of the river had the additional advantage of being isolated and capable of defence. Egypt and

other wide plains beside great rivers were easily overrun, and then as easily lost. The heights of Western Palestine, on the other hand, were not only attractively fruitful, but also comfortably secure. Accordingly, the history of the country's relation to Arabia is one of constant tribal invasion. Midianites and Ishmaelites frequently broke in from the east, hungry for pasture and for spoil, while the great Moslem invasion of the seventh century A.D. was only another later and more important instance of the same westward movement. When the western mountains were held by a strong power, these inroads from the east could be held in check. But so soon as the western power declined, the tide of Arab invasion swept in again, "with the regularity and remorselessness of the sea."

Position
between
Assyria
and Egypt.

Palestine was also related to the great Empires of the Euphrates and the Tigris on the north-east, and to the powerful Kingdom of Egypt on the south-west. Between these two great centres of population and of dominion she formed "a bridge arching across a double sea of desert sands and waters." If armies or merchant caravans wished to pass from the Nile to the Euphrates or from the Euphrates to the Nile, they must either traverse West Palestine

viâ the Maritime Plain and Esdraelon, or else they must skirt Eastern Palestine, along part of the great road connecting Damascus with the head of the Akabah Gulf. Assyrian and Egyptian armies usually chose the former route, which meant at least terror and spoiling for the dwellers on the plain and among the foot-hills, if not the conquest and subjugation of the whole country. Then too, if Aramæans of Damascus desired to reach the Mediterranean coast at Acre or Tyre for purposes of trade or war, they had to cross Northern Palestine by the hills of Lower Galilee or by the Plain of Esdraelon.

Most important of all, perhaps, from the early historical point of view, is Palestine's relation to Egypt. Egypt always attracted the great nations of the north, because of its regular and exuberant fertility. Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Turks, were all drawn towards its rich fields and plains. But Palestine lay between these peoples and the object of their desire, and its lowland must either be traversed or conquered before the Nile Valley could be reached. Consequently, Palestine became a key to Egypt for invaders from the north, while, for the Egyptian kings, it was a country to be very closely watched and very carefully dealt with.

Relation
to Egypt.

If it happened to be strong and prosperous, it was good policy to keep it friendly and to use it as a 'buffer state' against more distant attack. If it was weak and defenceless, the better plan was to reduce it to submission and put it under the rule of a governor. Nearly all the great nations of the world have fought battles on Palestine's famous war-path, the Maritime Plain. Alexander and the Greeks, Pompeius and the Romans, the Crusaders, and, last of all, Napoleon, swept it with their armies, or used it as a base of attack upon the hill-country.

West
Palestine
secluded
and
defensible.

But though Palestine thus lay exposed to invasion from the east, and formed an open highway for armies and caravans from the north and south, the high tableland of the Western Range was sufficiently rugged and aloof to allow of comparatively easy defence. It was well protected on its west and east frontiers, and a good deal of it had very little attraction for any invader. Accordingly, when the Hebrews had once established themselves in their mountain fastnesses, they were able to hold them against all comers, until, in the providence of God, they were ready to give the true religion to the world.

The northern Hebrew kingdom, that of Israel, owing to internal weakness and greater exposure

to foreign attack, was the first to fall, being destroyed by Assyria in 722 B.C. The southern kingdom of Judah, occupying a territory less attractive and accessible, survived for another 150 years, at the end of which period it too fell before the same powerful enemy from the north-east. But the Judæans outlived their brief captivity in Babylonia and came back to their ancient seats, unbroken in spirit and even purified in their faith, to reform their state and re-establish their religion. Very much later, when the right moment came, the nation turned for the first time westward and, using the Mediterranean Sea, which had hitherto been a barrier, as a highway, gave its religion to the world.

The usual division of Palestine is into four longitudinal sections, or parallel bands running north and south. Inside the coast-line is a strip of plain, very narrow in the north, but widening out further south into quite a considerable breadth of comparatively level country. This is (a) the *Maritime Plain*, with Phœnicia, Sharon, and Philistia as its main subdivisions. Behind the Maritime Plain rises the long mountain wall of (b) the *Western or Central Range*, extending from Lebanon in the north to the furthest border of the Desert of Tih, in the south, and

Divisions of
Palestine.

broken midway by the Plain of Esdraelon, which allows an easy passage from the seacoast to the regions beyond the Jordan. All down the eastern side of this Central Range runs the deep cleft or valley, beginning with the depression between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and continuing, after an eastward bend round Hermon, along the Valley of the Jordan, the basin of the Dead Sea and the Valley of the Arabah to the Akabah Gulf. This is the third parallel zone, that of (c) the *Jordan Valley*. On the east side of this trench the mountains rise again in (d) the *Eastern Range*, which begins from Hermon and extends as an almost continuous tableland away south to a point beyond the territory of Moab. On its eastern side this long mountain range loses itself in the wilds of the Arabian Desert. These Western and Eastern Ranges, together with the cleft of the Jordan Valley, form what has been well called 'a triple barrier' between the sea of rolling waters on the west and the sea of interminable sand on the east. They constitute, along with the Maritime Plain, the principal physical features of the country.

Maritime
Plain.

(a) The Maritime Plain will be fully described later on, in its geography and history. From the historical point of view, it is perhaps the most interesting part of the country. It was

the first district to be won by an invader from the north or south, and the last to be relinquished. The Hebrews, who came in from the east and were true highlanders, never felt at home upon it, and through the greater part of their history it remained in the hands of hostile neighbours or of invaders.

(b) The Western Range is "a long deep wall of limestone," running down the whole length of the country and forming its backbone. Its northernmost section consists of the hills of Upper and Lower Galilee. In Upper Galilee the average height is 2800 ft., though Jebel Jermuk rises to 3934 ft. This is a considerable drop in level from the 8500 ft. of Samnîn, Lebanon's highest summit. The hills of Lower Galilee are not so high as those further north, and gradually sink towards the Plain of Esdraelon, which is only about 200 ft. above sea-level. South of Esdraelon the range rises again quickly into the scattered hill-groups and upland plains of Samaria, and then continues away southward unbrokenly as the hill-country of Ephraim and of Judah, and the lower plateau of the Negeb, as far as the Desert of the Wandering. In Samaria, Ebal is 3076 ft. high, and Gerizim 2848 ft. Further south, Tell Asur lifts its summit to 3318 ft., while the highest ground of all is in

Western Range.

the neighbourhood of Hebron, where an elevation of 3500 ft. is attained. Jerusalem stands about 2500 ft. above sea-level. The western flank of the range is a comparatively long and gentle slope towards the Maritime Plain; the eastern is short and precipitous down to the bed of the Jordan Valley. The valleys on the west of the main watershed drain into the Mediterranean Sea; those on the east, into the river Jordan. This Western Range carried the principal districts of the country, the provinces of Galilee, Samaria and Judæa. It was also the home of Israel, the nation whose history raised Palestine to its position of pre-eminence among the countries of the world.

Jordan
Valley.

(c) The deep trench between the Western and Eastern Ranges is one of the most remarkable physical formations in the world. "There may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley: there is nothing on this. No other part of our earth, uncovered by water, sinks to 300 ft. below the level of the ocean. But here we have a rift more than 160 miles long, and from 2 to 15 broad, which falls from the sea-level to as deep as 1292 ft. below it at the coast of the Dead Sea, while the bottom of the latter is 1300 ft. deeper still."¹ In

¹ G. A. S., p. 468 ff.

its course through Palestine it contains the bed of the river Jordan, for nearly 100 miles, the two lakes of Huleh and Gennesaret, and the Dead Sea, 53 miles long. The river Jordan, true to its name, 'the descender,' begins to fall rapidly almost from its very source. At Lake Huleh it is 7 ft. above the Mediterranean Sea; ten miles further south, at the Lake of Gennesaret, it is 680 ft. below. It continues to descend all the way to the Dead Sea, until there its bed has sunk to a depth of 1290 ft. The Arabs call the 65 miles of narrow valley between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea, *el Ghôr*, or 'the rift.' The Ghôr widens out at two points along its course into the Plains of Bethshan and Jericho.

(d) The Eastern Range has no such distinct break in its continuity as that caused on the west by Esdraelon. From below Hermon away south to a limestone ridge some 25 miles beyond Kir, it consists of an almost uniformly level mountain plateau, with an average height of 2000 ft. above sea-level. The average breadth is about 30 miles, though there is a widening to something like 80 miles in the region of Bashan. The rivers Yarmuk, Jabbok (or Zerka), and Arnon (or Mojib) divide the range into three distinct sections. North of the Yarmuk is the

The
Eastern
Range.

Land of Bashan or the upland district of the Hauran. Between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok lies part of Gilead ; while south of the Jabbok extends the territory once occupied by Ammon and Moab. This Eastern Range is a prolongation of Anti-Lebanon, whose highest summit, Hermon, rises to 9200 ft.

Plain of
Esdraelon.

To the four principal physical features just described, three other minor ones must be added. Two of them have already been mentioned in passing. There is (*e*) the *Plain of Esdraelon*, which breaks the Western Range into halves and connects the Maritime Plain, both north and south of Carmel, with the Jordan Valley and the regions further east. It forms an open triangular basin, with entrances from Sharon at Jokneam, Lejjun and Jenin, from the Bay of Acre by the gorge of the Kishon, and from the Jordan Valley at Bethshan by the Vale of Jezreel. The river Kishon drains its western half, Tabor and Little Hermon (Neby Duhy) stand as sentinels on the east, while Carmel, rising in gentle undulations on the south-west and sweeping seawards, guards it on the west. A full account of Esdraelon will be given in a later chapter. (*f*) On its western side, opposite the Province of Judæa, the Central Range, instead of letting itself down on to the Maritime Plain by

a series of steps or terraces, as it does further north, is separated from the plain by a group of lower-lying and more open hills, called the *Shephelah*, extending roughly from Ajalon to *Shephelah*. Beersheba. These low hills are cut off from the Judæan mountains by a distinct line of valleys running down the western border of Judæa, and have had a history of their own. They always belonged more to the Maritime Plain than to Judæa. (g) Lastly, there is the southernmost portion of the Western Range, the wild, inaccessible country beyond the limits of Judæa, known in the Old Testament as the *Negeb* or *South*, literally the 'dry' or 'parched' land. The Negeb
or South. Beginning in the neighbourhood of Dhaheriyeh (Debir), it stretches away south beyond Beersheba to the furthest limit of the wilderness of Tih.

Thus we get the following seven divisions of the country, each containing important cities and historic sites:—

- (a) The Maritime Plain ;
- (b) The Western or Central Range ;
- (c) The Jordan Valley ;
- (d) The Eastern Range ;
- (e) The Plain of Esdraelon ;
- (f) The Shephelah ; and
- (g) The Negeb or South.

This brief general description of the country will prepare the way for further particulars concerning its physical and historical features.

Palestine,
a small
country.

1. Palestine, in spite of its immense historical importance, is *a very small land*—perhaps the smallest of all the historic lands. From Dan to Beersheba is only some 140 miles, while the Jordan is only an average of 50 miles distant from the Mediterranean Sea. Adding the 30 miles breadth of Hebrew territory on the east of the Jordan, we get an area of something like 11,200 square miles. Israel's territory west of the Jordan, with which history is principally concerned, contains only about 6000 square miles, which means a tract about the size of Wales. Then the distances between places and districts within the borders of the country are much shorter than is usually realised. For example, it is less than 20 miles from Jerusalem to Hebron or Jericho or Bethel or Gezer, and from the Philistine strongholds to the western frontier of the hill-country. It is only about 40 miles, as the crow flies, from Jerusalem to the city of Samaria or to Beersheba, as well as from Shechem in Samaria to Nazareth in Galilee, and from Cæsarea on the seacoast to Tiberias by the waters of Gennesaret. The Western Range itself, in the region of Judæa, is only about 12

to 17 miles broad; the Eastern, in the same latitude, about 30 miles.

2. Palestine is also *a mountainous land*, a Palestine, a mountainous country. country consisting largely of elevated tablelands. It is mainly 'har' or 'hill-country,' surrounded by level tracts,—high land encircled and broken into here and there by more or less fertile low land. Hill-country and valley lie contiguous almost everywhere along its length, the former largely preponderating. The Western Range, while regarded in the O.T. as consisting of Mount Naphtali, Mount Ephraim and Mount Judah, is yet recognised as forming one long range, under the collective name "Mount or Hill-country of the Amorites" (Deut. i. 7). The Eastern Range, both as a whole and in part, is referred to as 'the Mount or Mountains of the Abarim.' When the Israelites were once properly settled in their mountain home west of the Jordan, they were in a position from which it was possible to look out upon the world with little fear of disturbance. They were sufficiently isolated and protected to be able to defend themselves successfully against attack, while at the same time their territory was open enough on all sides to make vigilance necessary and to keep military activity constant. A home like this, constituted and related as we have seen it

to be, provided a fine training-ground for the nation in the qualities of discipline, alertness and courage. Without their mountain fastnesses, the Hebrews could never have survived the attacks of hostile neighbours and more distant invaders. They were foot-soldiers, and could easily have been beaten on the plains by the cavalry and the chariots that came against them. But it was very different on their own ground, on the high tablelands and at the heads of the steep defiles of the western and eastern frontiers. There they could, and did, hold their own in opposition to the most powerful forces of invasion. Even Rome did not attempt the conquest of Judæa until she had captured the other provinces of the country, and then only succeeded in taking it after securing the approaches on three sides.

Palestine,
a land of
small
provinces.

3. Another characteristic of the country is *its brokenness*, the fact that it is separated into many small districts or provinces. These divisions are intensified by differences of soil and climate, as we shall see later on. When the five Danite spies came to Laish, in the far north, they found a people dwelling in quiet and security, having no dealings with any man.¹ Yet Laish was only 25 miles from Sidon on the west, and only about 40 miles from

¹ Judges xviii. 7.

Damascus on the east. This is an illustration of the separateness and isolation which might be found, within very short distances, in many parts of the land. Galilee was physically and historically distinct from the Hauran and from Samaria, though the three provinces lay close together. Even the Western Range south of Esdraelon was not a single district, but carried the rival provinces of Samaria and Judæa. This broken character of Palestine means "separate room and station for a far greater variety of race and government than could have been effected in so small a land by the simple distinction of mountain and plain."¹ And, as a matter of fact, the foreigner has always been in the land, from the time when Israel entered and found Hittites and various tribes of Canaanites in possession, to the present day when almost every nation has representatives on the ground.

4. Reference has just been made to the contrasts of climate in Palestine. These form one of the most surprising features of the country. The differences of climate result of course from differences of level, and from the influences of the sea on the west and the desert on the east. No country could present greater variations of temperature within so small an

Contrasts
of climate.

¹ G. A. S., p. 56 ff.

area. On the top of Hermon the climate is Alpine. The snows lie almost all the year round. Down by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the heat is almost tropical in the summer season. At Jericho, it is scarcely possible to live, in the very height of summer, so intense is the heat. Midway between these extremes, on the heights of the Western Range, the inhabitants enjoy a healthy, temperate climate, with regularity of seasons and cool nights. "One day at Joppa," writes Dr. Miller, "I enjoyed a balmy freshness and a soothing warmth like that of an early summer on the shores of Italy. The next, I was shivering at Jerusalem in damp, raw cold like that of a Scottish April. Two days thereafter, by the Dead Sea, I found myself in the midst of sweltering heat like that of Malabar, and exposed to an unclouded sun almost rivalling in fierceness the sun of Madras in May." The climate of the country is said to be considerably drier to-day than it was in ancient times.

Phenomena
of the year.

The year is divided into a rainy season and a dry. The rainy season begins about the end of October with the 'early' or 'former' rains, which serve to loosen the soil for ploughing. Then follow the heavy rains of December, January and February, drenching the ground

and filling the rivers, lakes, pools and cisterns. Finally come the 'latter rains,' or spring showers of March and April, providing moisture for the crops, which have been sown principally between the end of January and the end of February. Thus the promise of Jehovah, in Deut. xi. 14, is fulfilled: "I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil." The dry season extends from May to October. Not a drop of rain falls, the sky is almost without a cloud, and the heat during the daytime is excessive. The nights, however, are cool; there is heavy dew-fall, and occasional mists gather in the early morning. During the long, hot summer, the watercourses are dried up, the lower vegetation is rapidly scorched, the ground gets hardened and blistered, and even the supplies of water from springs and tanks often begin to fail. Isaiah and Joel refer more than once to the bush-fires that frequently break out.

The prevailing winds of the country are from the west. In winter, these bring the heavy rains and showers. So we find Jesus saying to the multitudes, "When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass." In summer, these

Prevailing
winds.

same westerly breezes help to moderate the excessive heat of the day, and allow the peasants to do their winnowing. Then there are the hot winds from the eastern and southern deserts, which "blow chiefly in the spring and for a day at a time." These "come with a mist of fine sand, veiling the sun, scorching vegetation, and bringing languor and fever to men." Our Lord was probably referring to these desert winds when He added to the words quoted above, "And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass" (Luke xii. 54, 55).

Variety of
vegetation.

5. The extraordinary variety of climate in different districts of Palestine is accompanied by an equally extraordinary variety of vegetation. "Her fauna and flora range along every degree between the Alpine and the tropical, between the forms of the Mediterranean basin and those of desert life, while she still cherishes, in that peculiar deep trench down the middle of her, animals and plants related to those of distant lands with which in previous geological periods she had closer relations."¹ The flora of Lebanon is said to resemble that of Northern Europe, the flora at the level of Jerusalem and on Carmel that of Southern Europe, while the botanical

¹ G. A. S., p. 79.

world in the neighbourhood of Jericho is most like that of Western India. The mass of the hill-country consisted in ancient times, as it does to-day, of wild, uncultivated moorland, 'the field' so often referred to in the O.T. Part of this was no doubt woodland, where oaks, terebinths, carobs, a few pines and cypresses, walnuts, sycomores and acacias grew, either in small scattered groups, or in woods of varying extent and closeness. Much more of the Palestinian 'field' consisted of "high, thick bush," with dwarf oaks and terebinths, arbutus, myrtle, juniper, thorn and wild olive. Down by the rivers grew oleanders with their 'blossoms red and bright,' willows, canes and tamarisks. There were plenty of orchards and gardens in the country, particularly on the lower levels. In these, nearly "all the fruit-trees of the temperate zone" were cultivated, such as mulberries, figs, pomegranates, almonds, walnuts, apricots, and, in greatest abundance, the olive (a native of Syria) and the vine. Oil made from the olive-fruit was one of the most important products of the country. Vines were cultivated on almost every hillside, as may be seen from the extensive remains of ancient terraces. In the gardens grew cucumbers, melons and gourds, leeks, onions and garlic, lentiles and beans, together with

coriander, mustard, camphire (henna), cummin, anise and rue.

Agriculture.

The most important of the Palestinian crops was wheat, which the inhabitants raised in sufficiently large quantities to allow of extensive exportation. Next to wheat came barley, used by the poor as an article of food, but chiefly given to the beasts of burden, which were also fed with clover, lupins and other forage plants. There was very little grass in the country that survived the long drought of summer. Millet, flax and perhaps cotton appear to have been grown in ancient times. Ploughing began when the early rains had loosened the soil, in November. Then came the sowing, usually broadcast out of a basket, but sometimes in rows along the furrows, principally during the month of February. This was followed by harrowing, weeding, and finally reaping, which began with the barley harvest as a rule, somewhere about the middle or end of April, according to situation. The gathering in of the wheat followed some fourteen days later, the whole harvest lasting seven weeks, according to the statement in Deut. xvi. 9: "Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee; from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing corn shalt thou begin to number seven weeks."

Threshing was usually done out in the fields, advantage being taken of the prevailing westerly winds to separate the corn from the chaff and broken straw.

But though grass and bush are scorched up during the summer season and nearly all the watercourses run dry, in the earlier part of the year a wave of green spreads over the hillsides, valleys and plains, the green fire glows from every tree and shrub, and the landscape is ablaze with beautiful flowers, brilliantly and variously coloured. The fields are dotted over with anemones, ranunculi, poppies, clovers, crocuses, irises, colchicums, gladioli and tulips, while the hillsides are adorned with the lavish blossoms of the styrax, the redbud, the arbutus and the myrtle. That is an exquisite word-picture of the spring-time, among the hills and valleys of Lower Galilee, which we have in the Song of Songs (ii. 11-13)—

Spring
landscape.

For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone ;
The flowers appear on the earth ;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ;
The fig-tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom,
They give forth their fragrance.

Passing from the vegetable to the animal

**Palestinian
fauna.**

world, from flora to fauna, a few facts of interest may be recorded. The principal domestic animals of Palestine were oxen, sheep and goats. "The commonest breed of oxen were black or brown, short-limbed and small." They were used chiefly for agricultural operations, and were pastured in the valleys and in the low country. In the half-wild state, they were sometimes dangerous to unprotected wayfarers. Sheep were reared all over the country, for the sake of their fleeces, as well as for their flesh and their milk. On wide and exposed pasture-grounds such as Palestine afforded, the presence and character of the shepherd made all the difference to the flock, as well for protection from 'the beasts of the field,' as for rest by the watercourses and food in the green pastures. The milk of the goats, so common throughout the country, was more highly prized than that of sheep, cows or camels. Goats' hair was woven into cloth, and goats' skins were made into vessels for carrying water, milk, wine and other fluids. Horses do not seem to have been used by the Israelites till the times of David and Solomon, though they must have been familiar objects in Egypt, and also among the Canaanite and Philistine inhabitants of the plains. This fact appears less strange when it is remembered

that the hill-country of Palestine is utterly unsuited to cavalry and chariots, and when the ingrained nomadic habits of Israel are borne in mind. Solomon increased David's force of 100 chariots with their horses to 12,000 cavalry horses and 1400 chariots (with certainly two and perhaps three horses to each chariot). Camels are mentioned very early in the O.T. They abounded in the desert regions and were used extensively for traffic along the highways of the whole of the East. The dog, cat, lion, wolf, bear, hyena, jackal, deer, hare and coney were all known in the country, in ancient times. Among birds, turtle-doves, pigeons, eagles, griffon - vultures, partridges, pelicans, sparrows and swallows were to be found in the different districts of the land.

The scenery and life of Palestine are very Palestinian fully and vividly reflected in the Old and scenery in New Testaments, particularly in connection the O.T. with the accounts of Israelite warfare, in the writings of the Prophets and Psalmists, and in the teachings of our Lord. The scenes of battle are always accurately and often minutely described. The Prophets, on the other hand, for the most part are attracted by the larger features of the country,—the phenomena of the desert regions, the abundant fertility of and N.T.

the land, the earthquakes and storms, the sunrise, the pastures and the mountains. Jeremiah and Amos in particular reflect the scenery of Jeshimon, or the Wilderness of Judæa; Micah, that of the Shephelah; while Isaiah is pre-eminently the prophet of Jerusalem the Holy City. "More than Athens to Demosthenes, Rome to Juvenal, Florence to Dante, is Jerusalem to Isaiah."¹ The Psalms afford beautiful glimpses now and again of the Palestinian landscape. It should be borne in mind that some of the descriptions in the O.T. represent the impressions made by the country upon a people whose previous experience had been of the desert, with its scarcity of water, its hot, monotonous expanses, and its peculiarities of life and occupation, who would therefore be tempted to exaggerate some of the features which were a surprise and a delight. For example, the country is described in Deut. xi. 9-11 as "a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of hills and valleys, that drinketh water of the rain of heaven,"—and even more glowingly in an earlier chapter (ch. viii. 7-9), as "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees

¹ Dr. G. A. Smith's *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. i. p. 22.

and pomegranates, a land of oil-olives and honey." There is another brief description, however, in Num. xiii. 32, which suggests other equally obvious aspects. The country is called "a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof," which may be taken as describing a region subject not only to famine, but also to pestilence.¹ There is abundant proof that the inhabitants were liable to both these troubles, as well as to droughts, earthquakes, the ravages of locusts, desolating storms and hot winds.

It is easy to understand that the settlement of desert tribes, in such a country as has just been described, would eventually bring about a complete change of life and of occupation. It would mean plenty instead of scarceness, and security in place of insecurity. But, more important than either of these, there naturally came about a rise in life, from nomadic to agricultural, from sojourning in tents to dwelling in houses and villages. The Israelites in the desert were pure nomads. But, soon after their settlement in Palestine among the half-conquered Canaanites, they became tillers of the soil, dwellers in cities, and eventually merchants as well. When Moses, towards the end of his life, bade the people remember the days of old, and

Effect of
the country
upon
Israel.

¹ D. B., vol. ii. p. 508.

consider the manifold providences of God, he described how God had found them in the desert, 'in the waste, howling wilderness,' how He had spread about His wings, like an eagle stirring up the nest and fluttering over the young birds, and how He had borne them away on His pinions, and had caused them to ride on the high-places of the land and to eat of the increase of the field, butter of kine and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and to drink wine of the blood of grapes. It was this rise in civilisation that enabled Israel to become a strong nation, and to accomplish the great work for which God chose it out from among the other nations of the earth.

CHAPTER II

ITS HISTORY

(a) *The Early Inhabitants*

PALESTINE has always been inhabited principally by Semitic peoples, who drifted in from the desert regions on the east. Though Hittites, Greeks, Romans, Franks, Turks, Kurds and Circassians have at one time or another been on the ground, some of them for long periods, "all these have scarcely ever been grafted on the stock; and the stock is Semitic." As Robertson Smith says, "One of the most palpable proofs that the populations of all the old Semitic lands possessed a remarkable homogeneity of character is the fact that in them, and in them alone, the Arabs and Arab influences took permanent root."¹ The various tribes or groups of Canaanites, who occupied the country when the Hebrews entered, do not seem to have been *aborigines*. There were

Early in-
habitants.

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 12 and 13.

The
primitive
Rephaim or
'giants.'

'giants' in the land, even before the time of the Canaanite invasions, and these 'giants' continued in their primitive seats until they were either absorbed or exterminated. They are mentioned under the general names of Rephaim and Anakim, and under the particular names of Zamzummim, Emim, Horim or Horites, and Avvim. In David's time we only read of Rephaim on the Philistine Plain, in the ancient city of Gath. In the earlier days of Moses and Joshua, they are much more widely distributed. On the west, Anakim had an important centre at Hebron, and were to be found also along the Central Range as far north as Carmel, as well as on the Philistine Plain, while on the east (according to Deut. iii. 11) "only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of the Rephaim." This statement points back to a time when there was a still wider distribution on the Eastern Range—probably to the time referred to in Deut. ii. 10-12 and Gen. xiv., when the four kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and the Goiim smote Rephaim on their way down the eastern border of the country, the Zuzim or Zamzummim in Ammon, the Emim in Moab, and the Horim or Horites in Edom. Probably at this same early period there were many 'giants' on the western hills, side by side

with Kenites, Hittites, Perizzites and Amorites. We read, for example, in Deut. ii. 23, of the Avvim, which dwelt in villages, as far as Gaza.

But of greater interest are the earliest ^{The} *immigrants*, the various groups of Canaanites, ^{Canaan-ites.} whom the Hebrews found in possession of the land. When Israel entered, these immigrants had been long settled, and had risen to a considerable degree of civilisation. The different names used to describe them seem to refer less to racial distinctions than to differences in habit of life or place of habitation. The Phœnicians ^{Phœnicians.} dwelt in the cities along the seacoast, as far south as Joppa, but principally north of Carmel, where Sidon and Tyre were their chief centres. From the former city they became known both among themselves, and to the Hebrews and the Greeks, as Sidonians. The Amorites or ^{Amorites.} 'Amurra' (of the Babylonian and Assyrian texts and the Tell-el-Amarna tablets) occupied the greater part of the Western Range. They were highlanders or mountaineers, dwelling principally in the hill-country west of the Jordan, but with offshoots on the east and south of the Central Range. They are depicted as a tall, handsome people, with fair skins, blue eyes, and light (or sometimes black) hair. Members of this race frequently settled in Egypt, and became

naturalised there.¹ Alongside of the Amorites were a number of subordinate Canaanitish tribes, about which scarcely anything certain is known, described as Girgashites, Hivvites, Perizzites and Jebusites. Of these, the Jebusites occupied the fortress of Jerusalem until 'the stronghold of Zion' was captured in David's time by Israel, while the Hivvites, possibly dwellers in villages, occupied the cities of the Gibeonite league (Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim) and also Shechem.

Kenites. The Kenites (mentioned in Gen. xv. 19 and elsewhere), close allies of the tribe of Judah, had their chief settlements in Southern Judæa and in the desert regions further south still. According to Professor Sayce, they resembled the gipsies of modern Europe, as well as the travelling tinkers or blacksmiths of the Middle Ages. In fact, they were probably a wandering

Kenizzites. tribe or guild of smiths. The Kenizzites, also mentioned among the earliest inhabitants of Canaan, belonged originally to Mount Seir, but

¹ According to Kittel (*Hist. of the Hebrews*, vol. i. pp. 18-26), the two names 'Canaanite' and 'Amorite' refer to the two most important ethnic elements in the pre-Israelite population of Canaan. Whether they are exactly synonymous, he is unable to decide. The double name seems against exact similarity, as also the two names Kanana and Amar on the Egyptian monuments.

had a settlement in South Canaan, under the name of Calebites (Kalibbites), which ultimately coalesced with the tribe of Judah.

Associated with the Canaanites of Western Palestine, were scattered groups of Hittites, ^{Hittiter.} members of the great nation which at a very early period invaded Syria from the north, and, after conquering it, succeeded in building up a powerful military empire, with Kadesh on the Orontes and Carchemish on the Euphrates as its chief centres. This empire was at its height during the 18th, 19th and 20th Egyptian dynasties. Afterwards, it declined before the armies of Egypt and Assyria. In the Egyptian records, the Hittites appear as Khata; on the Assyrian monuments, as Khatta or Khatê. In Josh. i. 4 the whole tract of country between the Lebanon Range and the river Euphrates is called 'the land of the Hittites.' The primitive home of the race was probably Cappadocia, in Asia Minor. Here, "in the ruins of Boghaz Keui and Eyuk, to the east of the Halys, are the remains of two of their most important cities." Abraham found representatives of the Hittites as far south as Hebron. Others are mentioned as dwelling, along with Jebusites and Amorites, in the mountainous districts. Ezekiel describes Jerusalem as

belonging to the land of the Canaanite, with the Amorite as its father and a Hittite as its mother.¹ Esau is said to have had two Hittite wives. In distinction from the Amorites, the Hittites are always represented as ugly and thick-set, with yellow skins, black hair gathered up into a pigtail, receding foreheads, and protruding upper jaws. "They wore boots with upturned ends, originally intended for use among the snows of the Taurus Mountains."²

Israel's
eastern
neighbours.

Ammon-
ites.

A word is necessary concerning the eastern neighbours of Israel to supplement what has just been said as to the early inhabitants of Palestine. On the east of the Jordan, there were three important groups of Semitic people, closely related to the Israelites, viz. Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites. The Ammonites originally occupied the mountain plateau between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon. But, shortly before the coming of Israel from Egypt and the Wilderness, they had been attacked and driven out of their territory into the desert by Sihon, an Amorite king from over the Jordan. It was this eastern Amorite Kingdom of Sihon, "carved out of the Ammonite territory," with Heshbon as its capital, that was allotted to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Though Ammon

¹ Ezek. xvi. 3, 45.

² Professor A. H. Sayce.

and Israel were akin, there were often bitter feelings and fierce feuds between them. In the time of Saul, Ammon was a powerful kingdom, under the rule of a strong sovereign, Nahash. After one of David's victories, we are told that he put the people of Rabbath-Ammon under saws and under harrows of iron and made them pass through the brick kiln. The history of Ammon covers a long period of time, continuing at least as late as the second century A.D., when there is a reference to them, by Justin Martyr, as still numerous. The Edomites were always Edomites. regarded as specially close kinsmen of Israel. They had kings long before there were any among the Israelites, and formed a powerful nation through long periods of history. Their home was in the broken, mountainous country of Seir, on both sides of the Arabah, as far south as the head of the Akabah Gulf. Before the beginning of the kingship, they had been governed by "allûphim," or "dukes," a title and office apparently handed down from the Horite aborigines of the district. According to Deut. xxiii. 7, 8, Edomites as well as Egyptians were allowed to enter into the "assembly of the Lord," in the third generation—a privilege which was not extended to Moabites or Ammonites until the tenth generation. There

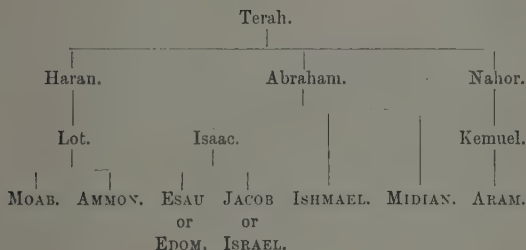
were many conflicts between Israel and Edom during the centuries between David and the Maccabees. About 125 B.C. John Hyrcanus conquered the country of the Palestinian Edomites or Idumæans, and compelled its occupants to adopt Judaism.

Moabites. Between the territories of Ammon and Edom lay the tableland of the Moabites, another Semitic people closely related to Israel. In early times, and again later when they were under a strong ruler, their northern border extended as far as the wady Hesban, over against Jericho. At other times, the river Arnon formed their limit in this direction. There must have been constant warfare between the tribes of Reuben and of Gad, and the Moabites, for the latter were always eager to regain possession of their ancient habitations to the north of the Arnon.

It seems certain that, in addition to these Ammonite, Moabite and Edomite relationships, Israel was also akin to the Aramæans¹ of the north-east, and to the Ishmaelites and Midianites

¹ An unwavering tradition connects Israel with Aram. Abraham came into Palestine from Aram-naharaim, while, according to Gen. xxiv., Rebekah, Isaac's wife, came from the same region. Jacob spent a long time in Haran with his uncle Laban, two of whose daughters became his wives.

of the regions along the eastern border of Palestine. The Angel of the Lord told Hagar that her son Ishmael should dwell 'over against,' *i.e.* 'to the east of' all his brethren. There were a few Ishmaelites also in the district immediately south of Canaan. These various connections of Israel may be seen at a glance, in the following table:¹—



All the groups of Palestinian inhabitants which have just been described appear to have been Semitic, except the Hittites. The fact that in Gen. x. 6 the Canaanites are said to be descendants of Ham, need not be taken as a denial of their Semitic character. According to the latest ethnological teaching, there is a fundamental racial connection between the

¹ D. B., vol. ii. p. 508.

Hamitic and the Semitic peoples. The latter occur in five great historical groups:—

- (1) Assyrians of Mesopotamia ;
- (2) Aramæans (or Syro-Chaldeans) of Syria, parts of Palestine and the Lower Euphrates ;
- (3) Canaanites (including Hebrews, Phœnicians and Carthaginians) ;
- (4) Arabs ; and
- (5) Himyarites of Arabia Felix and Abyssinia.

Language
of
Palestine.

The ancient language of Palestine, in use before and after the entrance of Israel, was Hebrew, a variety of the primitive Semitic tongue, and practically the same as Phœnician and the language of the O.T. After the Return, Hebrew was still spoken and written by the Jews. But Aramaic influences soon began to creep in, and eventually predominated. Hebrew ceased to be the spoken language, and Aramaic took its place. The oldest Hebrew (or Phœnician) letters, those found on the Moabite Stone (*circa* 850 B.C.) and on the Baal-Lebanon bowls, appear to have been slowly evolved, during a period of some six or seven centuries, from the Egyptian Hieratic characters. They were gradually replaced, after the Return of the Jews, by the closely-resembling but more cursive letters of

the Aramæan alphabet, which "had become the medium of commercial intercourse throughout Western Asia," after the political decline of the Phœnician cities.

(b) *The Coming and Settlement of Israel*

The history of Israel,¹ the principal invader and ruler of Palestine, begins with the departure of Terah, accompanied by Abram his son, and Lot his son's son, and Sarai his son Abram's wife, from Ur of the Chaldees for Haran, in Paddan-aram or Mesopotamia. From Haran, a little later, Abraham and Sarai, with Lot and all the substance they had gathered and the souls they had gotten, moved southward past Damascus and across the Jordan into the land of Canaan, settling finally, after a brief visit to Egypt, "in the districts of Mamre-Hebron and

¹ The people called themselves Yisrael or benē (sons of) Yisrael, from the name of their ancestor Israel (or Jacob). Another name, chiefly used by foreigners, sometimes by themselves when contrasted with foreigners, is 'Ibhrim or Hebrews, which may mean "those from beyond" or "those from the other side," referring to the fact that the people so designated came into the country from some region away beyond the Jordan or the Euphrates. 'Ιουδαῖοι or Judæi or Jews, used by classical writers and by Josephus, means strictly 'persons belonging to Judah.' It soon became the national name, in contrast to the Gentiles.

Beersheba-Gerar." Abraham's followers and descendants remained in Canaan till the time of Joseph, son of Jacob, when we find them migrating into Egypt, where they settled in the land of Goshen and devoted themselves to pastoral pursuits. This was probably towards the close of the Hyksos dynasty, while the Pharaoh Apepa was on the throne. If the name 'prw' (or 'Apuriu'), found in the Egyptian records, be equivalent to 'Ibhrim or Hebrews, this sojourn of Israel in the Nile Valley is historically established. Even apart from this proof, there is no good ground for doubting the fact. Such Semitic immigrations were frequent in this early age, and there was every reason for silence on the part of the Egyptian monuments concerning the Hebrews and their adventures. There is the same apparent silence concerning the Hyksos invaders. No events more deeply impressed themselves upon the Hebrew imagination than the memorable circumstances associated with this residence in Egypt, which was the means of leading the people into the world's history.

The Oppression of the immigrants, in the time of Thothmes III. of the 18th dynasty, or, as others say, under Rameses II. of the 19th, led eventually to the Exodus, under the leader-

Israel in
Egypt.

ship of Moses, to the forty years' sojourn in the Wilderness of the Wanderings, and finally to the appearance of the people, now raised from a multitude of nomads to something like a nation, before the eastern frontier of Canaan, where Joshua succeeded to the command on the death of Moses. Before an entrance was effected, Joshua and his army made sure of the land on the east of the Jordan, particularly the territory of Sihon, who had displaced the Ammonites only a little while before. Sihon's kingdom was conquered and assigned to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. The half tribe of Manasseh, either now or a little later, settled in the district to the north of Gad, the territory described in Num. xxi. 35 and Deut. iii. 14 as belonging to Og, king of Bashan.

The Exodus
and
Wandering

Conquest of
Eastern
Palestine.

There are two accounts of the conquest of Western Palestine—one in Josh. ii.—xi. 9, the other in detached passages from the remaining chapters of Joshua and in Judges i. These narratives show us the Israelites, under Joshua, crossing the Jordan over against Gilgal, which became their permanent camp, and first of all attacking and capturing the strong city of Jericho. After this the assault upon the hill-country began. A great victory over an

Conquest of
Western
Palestine.

alliance of Canaanite kings was won near Gibeon. Then followed a separation of forces. The tribes of Judah and Simeon, together with the Kenites, turned southward and attacked the Canaanite and Hittite inhabitants of what afterwards became Central and Southern Judæa. After defeating them, they settled on their pastures and in their cities, and eventually intermarried with them. Ephraim and Manasseh, under the leadership of Joshua, accompanied by tribes that later on settled north of Esdraelon, advanced upon the hill-country to the north of Jerusalem, and, after capturing many of the principal strong places, settled in the district which later on became Samaria, in some instances reducing the Canaanites to submission; in others, dwelling peacefully by their side. A final stand seems to have been made by a confederacy of kings in the far north, but it was of no avail, for Joshua routed the combined forces by the Waters of Merom. In spite, however, of this and other crushing blows, the original inhabitants managed to retain their hold, for some considerable time longer, upon a large part of the Maritime Plain, upon the whole of Esdraelon, and upon many strongholds in the western hill-country.

The settlement of the Israelites in Western Palestine led to a complete change in their character and fortunes, and put them finally in the way to become what God had chosen them to be in the world's history. An Israelite-Canaanite stock arose by amalgamation, much more numerous than the Israelite alone, agricultural and warlike, dwelling in cities, given to trading, and capable, when the time was ripe, of being welded into a strong nation. The period of the Judges, during which this change went steadily on, witnessed considerable deterioration in the religious faith and practices of the new-comers. It was also during these two hundred years of discipline and agitation that the way was prepared for the establishment of the Undivided Kingdom, under Saul, David and Solomon [1017-937 B.C.]. Saul was "the fighting chief" of the infant nation; David, "the founder and organiser of a powerful state." The latter made Jerusalem the political and religious centre of the kingdom, raised the tribe of Judah to a position of pre-eminence and built up an empire that extended nominally from the borders of Egypt to the valley of the Euphrates.

Settlement
and trans-
formation
of Israel.

The
Undivided
Kingdom.

(c) Later Invaders

After Solomon's reign, which was outwardly peaceful and prosperous but inwardly demoralising, came the Disruption, with the consequent establishment of the two rival Kingdoms of Israel, in the north under Jeroboam I., and of Judah in the south under Rehoboam. The history of these two kingdoms may be followed in 1 and 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. The Northern Kingdom of Israel being more exposed, began to feel the stress of foreign attacks sooner than its rival in the south, and during a period of nearly a hundred years, beginning with the reign of Baasha, was engaged in almost continual warfare with the armies of Damascus, the capital city of the Syrian or Aramæan kings. This long conflict was at length brought to an end by the interference of Assyria, whose kings eventually crushed both Syria and Israel. It was only temporary weakness in the Egyptian and Assyrian Empires that had allowed the Undivided Kingdom to reach such large dimensions and the Divided Kingdoms to remain for even a short space of time unmolested. But in 745 B.C. under Pul or Tiglath-Pileser the crowning period of the Assyrian Empire was reached. Israel's independence began to be seriously

Aramæan
attacks.

Assyrian
interfer-
ence.

threatened. The Assyrian net was gradually drawn closer, till, in 722, Sargon besieged Samaria, the Israelite capital, took it and carried away the main mass of the inhabitants to Mesopotamia and Media. A century and a half later, the successors to the Assyrian dominion in the east, the Babylonians, after repeated collisions with the surviving Kingdom of Judah, surrounded Jerusalem with a powerful army, under Nebuchadrezzar, captured it after an eighteen months' siege, demolished its walls and buildings, and then carried away practically the whole of the population to Babylonia. This was in 586 B.C. Only 'the poorest of the land' were left 'to be vinedressers and husbandmen,' under the rule of Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadrezzar made governor. Babylonian invasion.

Persian period [560-333 B.C.].—The Exile in Babylonia lasted altogether about fifty years, until the time of the edict issued by Cyrus, in 538, permitting the Return and the rebuilding of the Temple. Cyrus, 'king of Ansan,' had appeared on the eastern horizon of Babylon, about 560 B.C., and started out upon his wonderful career of conquest. Astyages, king of the Manda or nomad Scyths and Cimmerians, had fallen before him in 549, and North Mesopotamia and Armenia in 546. Finally, Babylon Persian supremacy.

surrendered in 538. There are hints of a First Jewish Return under Sheshbazzar, which led to very little result, but this is now very gravely doubted. The principal Return seems to have been the one under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, in 522. This, backed by the activity and prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, issued in the rebuilding of the Temple (516 B.C.). Half a century later, in 458, Ezra, a ready scribe in the law of Moses, came to Jerusalem from Babylon, with authority to reform the restored community on the basis of the Torah or Law, and to beautify the House of the Lord. Assisted energetically by Nehemiah, an officer of the Persian Court, who was sent as governor to Judæa in 445, he succeeded in bringing about the separation of the nation from 'the people of the land,' the abandonment of mixed marriages and a much greater strictness in the service of Jehovah; so that in Jerusalem the Law became supreme, and the Jews pledged themselves to the careful observance of all its injunctions. Very little is known concerning the subsequent history of Judæa during the Persian period.

Greek period [332-166 B.C.].—In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great destroyed the rule of Persia in Syria by the battle of Issus. On his way to Egypt, a year later, he received the

Ezra and
Nehemiah.

submission of Samaria and Judæa. "After Alexander's death, Greek influence was brought to bear upon Palestine from two great centres, viz. Alexandria and Antioch." For a hundred years after the battle of Issus, the Ptolemies of Egypt held and controlled Southern Palestine, though the Seleucidæ of Antioch tried repeatedly to wrest it away from their grasp. This is the period of Greco-Egyptian influence, during which there was a wide diffusion of Greeks over the whole of the East, and a great dispersion of the Jews among the principal centres of Greek life and influence. As a result of this double movement, a subtle and powerful process of Hellenisation was started among the Jews abroad and the Jews at home. Large numbers of the inhabitants of Judæa removed to Alexandria and other Greek cities, and there was a constant return stream of partly Hellenised Jews to the Holy City. After the death of Ptolemy IV., in 205 B.C., Antiochus III. of Syria succeeded in making Palestine part of the Seleucidæan Kingdom. The change was at first a welcome one to the Jews, though it was only from one Greek power to another. But it soon turned out to be anything but an improvement, for, in 175, Antiochus IV., surnamed Epiphanes, became king. He began by supporting the intrigues of the Grecian party

Greek
supremacy.

Ptolemaic
dean.

Seleucidæan.

in Jerusalem, under Jason and Menelaus. But eventually he resolved to bring about the thorough Hellenisation of Judæa. Apollonius was sent against the Holy City, took it, broke down the walls, disarmed or slaughtered the inhabitants and established a Syrian garrison in the citadel of Akra. This was immediately followed by a ruthless attempt to abolish everything distinctively Jewish. Pagan ceremonies were performed in the partly destroyed Temple. Every copy of the Torah that could be secured was publicly burnt, and the Jews were compelled to worship the heathen gods and to eat swine's flesh.

Maccabean
ago.

Hasmonæan period [166 - 63 B.C.]. — This ruthless treatment was too much for the loyal majority of the nation, and soon passive resistance passed into open revolt, under the priest Mattathias, of the family of the Hasmonæans, and his famous sons, Judas, Simon and Jonathan. Judas Maccabeus succeeded in 162 B.C. in forcing Syria to restore the religious freedom of the nation. Jonathan, in 153, compelled Alexander Balas to acknowledge his high-priesthood. Twelve years later, Simon, after driving the Syrian garrison out of Akra, was declared by the whole Jewish nation to be 'high priest, captain and governor' for ever.

Roman period [63 B.C.—614 A.D.].—Not long after these great events, the power of the Hasmonæans began steadily to decline, until in June, 63 B.C., after several previous interventions, the Romans under Pompeius carried Jerusalem by storm, abolished the Hasmonæan kingship and made Judæa part of the Roman Province of Syria. Roman suzerainty in Palestine lasted from this conquest of the Holy City, across the time of the Herods, the Jewish Wars and the early centuries of Christianity, to about 395 A.D., when Theodosius divided the empire into Western and Eastern. Palestine thereafter belonged to the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire, for some 240 years. Roman supremacy.

Moslem period [635–1094 A.D.]. — After fourteen years of Persian rule under Chosroes [614–628], Syria and Palestine were completely overrun by the Arabs, who became at last united in the faith of Mohammed and under the powerful leadership of Khalif Omar. Jerusalem was taken in 637. The new Moslem conquerors of the country were Moslems from Mecca and Medina, who came by the great Hajj or pilgrim road and broke in upon the hill-country from the east. They called the whole of Syria (including Palestine) Esh-sham, and divided it into five junds or military Moslem rule.

districts, corresponding roughly to the five divisions of the code of Theodosius, in the fifth century.¹ "All writers seem to agree that Omar's conquest was unstained by blood. He proclaimed security for life and property on payment of tribute, and allowed the existing churches to stand, though no new ones might be built."² His successors seem to have adopted the same policy, across the centuries that followed, until the time when the Seljuk Turks came into power, about 1060 A.D. They overran Persia, Palestine and Asia Minor, and finally under Isar el Atsis took Jerusalem in 1077.

Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem [1099-1187 A.D.].—The Moslems had levied tolls after about 1020 A.D. upon pilgrims, but had protected life and preserved the sacred places. Now "toll gave place to robbery and ransom, and protection of the holy places to desecration." So the Crusades began, which brought the kings and

¹ Palæstina I., of the Byzantine nomenclature, including Judæa and Samaria, with Cæsarea as capital, became the Arab Filastin, with Er Ramleh as its capital. Palæstina II., covering Galilee and part of Perea, with Scythopolis as capital, became, with the addition of the Jordan Valley, Al Urdunim. Palæstina III., including Idumea and Arabia Petrea, was divided between Filastin and the jund of Damascus. See Townsend MacCoun's *The Holy Land, in Geography and in History*, vol. ii. p. 105.

² D. B., vol. ii. p. 590.

armies of Western Europe on to Palestinian soil. Godfrey of Bouillon captured Jerusalem in 1099, and assumed the title of 'Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.' It was not, however, until the time of his successors, Baldwin I. and II., that the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was fully established and most widely extended. This kingdom was feudal and based upon the famous document called 'the Assizes of Jerusalem.' Its ecclesiastical organisation was in the hands of the bishops of Jerusalem and Antioch. "The picturesque element was the growth of the military orders—the Hospitallers or Knights of St. John, who vowed to protect the sick, and the Templars or Knights of the Temple, who provided a safe conduct for pilgrims. Each constituted a powerful fighting contingent, rich in moneyed resources."

Crusading
period.

The death-blow to the Latin Kingdom was struck by Saladin, a Kurdish chief who had become Sultan of Egypt in 1171 and aspired to the suzerainty of the Mohammedan world. After a great victory over the Crusading forces at Hattin, in Galilee (July 1187), he compelled Jerusalem to surrender in October of the same year. The Franks never recovered the sacred city, though part of it was ceded by treaty to Frederick II., Emperor of Germany, in 1229.

Saladin.

After 1244, Palestine was again in Moham-
medan hands, and its history becomes barren
and almost entirely devoid of interest. About
1517 it passed into the possession of the Turks
(under the Ottoman sultan Selim), to whom it
has belonged ever since.

One memorable invader of comparatively
Napoleon I. recent date is Napoleon I., whose ambition led
him to desire a great Eastern empire. In 1799
he conquered Egypt, crossed the desert to the
north - east, stormed Gaza and Jaffa and
besieged Acre. Unable to take it, he gave up
his ambitious scheme and withdrew to Egypt.
So "the banner of the Prophet still floated over
Palestine."

BOOK II
WESTERN PALESTINE

I.—GALILEE

CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER III

THE PROVINCE AND THE PEOPLE

TRAVELLERS in Western Palestine have ^{Intro-}
always been struck by the beauty of the ^{ductory.}
scenery in Galilee, whether they have approached
it from the Lebanons in the north or from the
hill-country of Ephraim in the south. Cut off
from the main mass of the Central Range by the
Plain of Esdraelon, the province has had a history
of its own, across long periods, quite distinct
from that of the southern districts of Samaria
and Judæa. At the beginning of the Christian
era, it was one of the most fruitful and well-
populated regions in the world, being abundantly
supplied with water and possessing a rich soil,
which was diligently and extensively cultivated.
Even before the days of our Lord, Galilee had
been the scene of many important events in
the history of the Jewish nation and the home
of many distinguished personages. But since
Jesus moved to and fro among its cities and

villages, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, it has become the most sacred tract of country in the world. The Jews themselves had two of their sacred cities in Galilee, namely Safed and Tiberias, and, when Jerusalem ceased to be the political and religious centre of the nation Tiberias on the shore of the Lake became the seat of the Sanhedrim, and for a long time carried on worthily the high traditions of Jewish sanctity and learning.

The name
'Galilee.'

The Hebrew word 'galil' (= "ring" or "circle"), with the feminine termination appended, was sometimes used to describe a ring or circuit of towns and villages. Thus Ezekiel refers to the country east of Jerusalem as 'the eastern galilee,' and we also read of the 'galilees' or 'circles' of Jordan and of the Philistines. This same word occurs at an early period in connection with the highlands on the extreme north border of Palestine, which were known as 'Galilee of the Gentiles.' Then the name gradually extended southward over the hill-country, until eventually it reached and included the Plain of Esdraelon.

The in-
habitants.

When Palestine was divided among the twelve tribes, Galilee fell to the lot of Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali and Issachar.¹

¹ Naphtali occupied the highland plateau of Upper Galilee and

The members of these tribes formed the Hebrew population of the province, living side by side with the earlier inhabitants, who were chiefly Hittites, Phœnicians, Hivites in the neighbourhood of Hermon, and other Canaanite tribes. Comparatively few Jews settled in Galilee after the Return. But when John Hyrcanus extended the Jewish State between the years 135 and 105 B.C. the province became much better populated, and the Law was made binding upon all its inhabitants. Thenceforward it was known as "the Galilee" without any appendage such as "of the Gentiles," while the Galilean Jews grew to be full of pride in their beautiful and fruitful country. Later still, through the earlier decades of the Christian era, the district remained loyally Jewish, in spite of strong Greco-Roman influence in many of its principal towns and cities.

The boundaries of Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun and Issachar are definitely drawn in Joshua xix., where some sixty-nine cities with their villages

The border
of the
province.

the fertile country bordering on the western shore of the Lake. It was a rich and beautiful inheritance, "full with the blessing of Jehovah." Asher bordered Naphtali on the west and possessed some very fruitful tracts. Zebulun's territory was mainly inland, but ran out westward to the sea. Zebulun and Issachar were in close proximity to foreigners. (Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19.)

are named. Unfortunately, the sites of most of these are still undiscovered. Therefore the chapter gives only slight help in tracing the border-line and fixing the true divisions of the province. Josephus names as many as forty cities and villages, one half of which remain unidentified. He, however, roughly but correctly indicates the natural boundaries. These are—on the north, the gorge of the Kasimiyeh; on the south, the southern edge of Esdraelon; on the east, the Upper Jordan and the eastern shores of the Lake; and on the west, Phœnicia.¹ These boundaries enclose a province about 50 to 55 miles long by 25 to 35 miles broad, containing an area of some 1600 square miles, which is less than a third of Western Palestine.

Divisions of
Galilee.

Concerning the divisions of Galilee, Josephus says, "Phœnicia and Syria encompass about the Galilees, which are two, and are called the Upper Galilee and the Lower." Another similar division is the one given in the Talmud, according to which the province "contains the upper, the lower and the valley. Thus the country above Kefr Chananyah, where the sycamore is not found, is called Upper Galilee; the country below Kefr Chananyah, where the

¹ The seacoast of Phœnicia, though given to the children of Asher, never really belonged to them.

sycamore flourishes, is called Lower Galilee; while the valley is the district of Tiberias." One of the most recent and authoritative accounts of the province separates it into three portions—(1) The Plain of Esdraelon, (2) the country west of the Lake as far as the Phœnician Plain, and (3) the highest ground in the north as far as the Nahr Kasimiyeh. The second of these portions forms Lower Galilee; the third, Upper Galilee. Lower Galilee consists of "a series of long parallel ranges, all below 1850 ft., which, with broad valleys between them, cross from the plateau above Tiberias to the maritime plains of Haifa and Acre." Upper Galilee is "a series of plateaus, with a double water-parting and surrounded by hills from 2000 to 4000 ft. As you gaze north from the Samaritan border, these three zones rise in steps above one another to the beginnings of Lebanon."¹ Stanley calls the Galilean mountains the western roots of Hermon.

One of the features of Galilee is its abundance of water. Those words of promise spoken to the Hebrews, "for the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a goodly land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths springing forth in valleys

The waters
of Galilee.

¹ G. A. S., p. 416. The third zone is of course the Plain of Esdraelon.

Lakes.

and hills," are literally true of this northern division of Palestine. Large quantities of water are stored, during the rainy season, among the higher slopes and plateaus, and thence dispensed by means of rivers and springs over the lower-lying tracts. First of all, there are the two lakes, Huleh or the Waters of Merom, and Tubariya or the Lake of Gennesaret. *Huleh*, the Samechonitis of Josephus, "half morass, half tarn," lies immediately south of the marshy plain called by the same name. It has an elevation of about 7 ft. above the Mediterranean, and "the open water is richly surrounded by swamps and jungles of the papyrus reed." The Valley of the Upper Jordan being one of the entrances to Palestine, this far northern lake has more than once been the scene of battles which have had important consequences for the inhabitants of the country. Here Joshua fought one of his great conflicts with the Canaanites of the north. The Rabbis could hardly find terms glowing enough in which to describe their beautiful *Lake of Gennesaret*. They said that Jehovah had created seven seas, and of these He had chosen the Sea of Gennesaret as His special delight. When the many associations of this lake with events of our Lord's ministry are remembered, Stanley's description of it as "the most sacred

sheet of water that this earth contains " will be recognised as in no degree exaggerated.

There are at least three important rivers and several larger streams in the province. (1) The principal river is, of course, the *Jordan*, nearly 100 miles long, with its many affluents and springs. Rising in the neighbourhood of Tell el Kady and Banias, from four streams which unite above Huleh, it flows south in a steadily deepening channel till it empties itself into the head of Gennesaret at a depth of 680 ft. below sea-level. It has fallen to this depth in less than 9 miles. Six miles north of the Lake it is crossed by the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob, on that famous thoroughfare to Damascus known as the 'Way of the Sea,' or 'Via Maris' of the Middle Ages. (2) On the north border of the province, the *Litany*, as it is called where it rises away among the Lebanons near Baalbek, flows south through the El Bukeia as far as the fortress of Belfort. There it turns suddenly at right angles and as the Nahr Kasimiyeh flows due westward into the Mediterranean.¹ (3) That ancient river, the river *Kishon*, ranks next in importance to the Jordan, with a length from source

¹ This river is probably *not* the ancient Leontes, which Ptolemy places between Sidon and Beyrout. The Leontes is more likely the Botrenus (Nahr el Awleh), north of Sidon.

to mouth of some 23 miles. The position of its mouth in the Bay of Acre, near the base of Carmel, is continually shifting. Winding down Esdraelon from the roots of Tabor, it drains the whole western portion of the plain, and breaking through the gorge at Harithiyeh (Harosheth) empties itself into the sea, close by Haifa. Its true source seems to be in the springs near Khan el Mezrah, while it is copiously reinforced by waters from the fifty or sixty springs between Jokneam and Kedesh, and in the neighbourhood of Lejjun. (4) The river *Belus*, celebrated for its fine sand, used so largely by the ancients in the manufacture of glass, flowed into the sea not far from Acre. It may be the present Nahr Namein, just to the south of that city.

Greater
streams
and
springs.

Among the greater streams of Galilee are wady et Tawahin, with its source near Safed in a spring not far from Meiron; the stream formed by wadies Farah, Auba and Hindaj, starting from el Jish and draining into Huleh; wady el Melek, connecting Buttauf and the sea; wady el Kurn, running down from the watershed hills to the sea at Achzib, and many more that need not be mentioned. In addition to the rivers and streams are the numerous springs and wells of the district. "Beautiful springs," says Stanley, "characteristic of the whole

valley of the Jordan, are unusually numerous and copious along the western shores of the Lake." There are the cool springs above and the hot springs below Tiberias, the abundant waters in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, the fine spring-head of Ras el Ain which supplied Tyre by means of a long aqueduct, and the springs of Lejjun. Scripture passages refer to the abundance of the dews of Hermon and Tabor and to the perpetual snow on Hermon. All these rivers, streams and springs mean a superabundance of water, which gave Galilee an advantage over Samaria, and set it in marked contrast to Judæa.

Such copious water-supply means abundant fertility, all other conditions being equal; and, as a matter of fact, all authorities unite in celebrating the productiveness and wealth of Galilee. That other half of the promise made to the Hebrews was also true of this highly favoured district, which described Palestine as "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil-olives and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; thou shalt not lack anything in it." Josephus, who knew the province well, testifies that the soil was universally rich and fruitful, and that it

Fertility of
Galilee.

invited even the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation. Consequently it was everywhere tilled and scarcely any part was allowed to lie idle. Naphtali was indeed a land "satisfied with favour and full with the blessing of Jehovah." The Plain of Gennesaret at the north-west corner of the Lake is described as "that unparalleled garden of God." All the principal trees and fruits of Palestine seem to have flourished in Galilee to perfection. "The uplands, gentle slopes and broader valleys were rich in pastures, meadows, cultivated fields, vineyards, olive-groves and fruit-trees of every kind." Here grew "the vine, the olive and the fig; the hardy walnut, the terebinth and the hot-blooded palm; the cedar, cypress and balsam; the fir-tree, the pine and the sycamore; the bay-tree, the myrtle, the almond, the pomegranate, the citron and the beautiful oleander. These, with still many other forest, fruit and flowering trees and shrubs and aromatic plants, together with grains and fruits, to which should be added an infinite profusion of flowers, make up that wonderful variety of natural productions which adorned and enriched the region where was the home of Jesus."¹

¹ Merrill's *Galilee in the Time of Christ*, p. 26.

The chief products of the country were oil, wine, wheat and fish. "In Asher oil flows like a river," said the Rabbis, in reference to the word of Moses, concerning Asher, "let him dip his foot in oil." Gischala was the chief place for this commodity, made from the olives which were so abundant throughout the province. Both Syrians and Phœnicians drew largely upon Galilee for their oil-supply. John of Gischala once enjoyed a monopoly of the oil-trade and made a fortune out of it. At Jotapata the store was so copious that it was used as a means of defence against the Romans under Vespasian. Large quantities were heated in vessels and then poured down upon the Roman soldiers. Penetrating beneath their armour, the scalding liquid ran down their bodies and fed upon their flesh like flame itself, so that the men could only leap and roll about in agonising pains, as they fell down from the bridges that had been laid. In the days of Solomon, large quantities of the best oil were sent annually to Hiram, king of Tyre. Amongst the other articles supplied to this king were stores of wine and wheat. Sigona seems to have produced the best wine, while the region about Sepphoris was noted for the quality of its grains, as were also the Valley of Jezreel and the fields

Chief
products.

of Gennesaret. Dr. Merrill mentions the flax that was raised in certain districts of Galilee, from which the women made linen fabrics of special fineness and beauty. Kefr Chananyah and Sichin were famous for the manufacture of pots, made of dark clay, used principally for holding oil. The Talmud calls Magdala the "city of colour," and one portion of the place was known as "the tower of dyers." This was because of a rich dye made there from the indigo plant, which grew in quantity in the immediate neighbourhood.

Proximity
to the
Phœnician
seaports.

It must not be forgotten how highly favoured Galilee was in being comparatively close to the ports of Phœnicia. The Phœnicians, for long periods, controlled the trade of the world. Their ships visited almost every known seaport. So they became carriers of the products of this very fruitful province. Both Tyrians and Sidonians probably drew largely upon the resources of Galilee, during the greater part of their history, for their staple articles of food and manufacture. The Tyrians themselves were celebrated for the durability and wonderful tints of their purple dye, for the elegance and fineness of their glass vessels and ornaments, as well as for their skill in the building and equipment of ships. The Sidonian workmen

made drinking vessels of silver and gold, and were also skilled engravers of precious stones.

In a land so well watered and so lavishly Population
of Galilee. fertile there would naturally be an abundant population. This was especially the case during the years of our Lord and for a considerable period before and after His time. The whole province was dotted with villages and towns, with here and there good-sized cities. These places were mostly inhabited by an industrious, enterprising, very patriotic and eminently courageous people, thoroughly Jewish and in large part devoted to agricultural pursuits. The figures of Josephus as to the population of Galilee have been gravely doubted. He speaks of 204 cities and villages, the smallest of which numbered above 15,000 inhabitants. Of these, about 40 are named in his Histories, and of these 40 not more than a half have been even approximately identified. Josephus' figures mean something like three million inhabitants. Such a number sounds exaggerated, but Dr. Merrill has given good reasons for the conclusion that the province may have supported even so large a number of people within its 2000 square miles of territory and its numerous cities, towns and villages.¹ "Save in the recorded hours of

¹ Dr. Merrill's *Galilee*, § 11, p. 62.

our Lord's praying, the history of Galilee has no intervals of silence and loneliness; the noise of a close and busy life is always audible; and to every crisis in the Gospels and in Josephus we see crowds immediately swarm."¹

Thoroughly
Jewish.

Though there was a mingling of nationalities in Galilee, the Galileans may fairly be characterised as a thoroughly and patriotically Jewish people, especially during the later centuries of their history. The Jews had begun, as early as the period of Greek supremacy, to make themselves at home in almost every part of the civilised world. Yet, wherever they settled, they kept distinct from their neighbours. With extraordinary tenacity they clung to their cherished religious ideas and their peculiar religious practices, never allowing any nation to interfere with them. But, though exclusive and devoted in religion, the Jew was as a rule tolerant and cosmopolitan in the matter of social and commercial relations; and the Galilean Jew probably led the way in this spirit of friendliness to foreigners. As the Jews claimed a right to establish themselves in any part of the world, so they allowed strangers to settle freely on their own soil. Dr. Merrill thinks that Greek influence in Christ's time upon the true sons of

¹ G. A. S., p. 421.

Israel can be reduced to a very small amount. "The decided contempt of the Jews as a nation for all foreign languages, learning, science, history, etc., would tend to preserve their Jewish character, their religion, and peculiar customs intact."¹

The Galileans seem also to have been for the most part skilled and industrious workers. Some found occupation in the trades of weaving, dyeing and pottery-making, while many more were engaged in connection with the fisheries of the Lake and the shipbuilding yards of the Lake-side. But the bulk of the working inhabitants were probably cultivators of the soil or tenders of the fruit-trees.

It was said of Zebulun and Naphtali in Deborah's time—

Zebulun was a people that jeopardard their lives unto the death,

And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.

If this was true then of these hardy northerners, it was even truer, in the later Roman period, of the Galileans. Braver soldiers could hardly be found anywhere. It should be remembered that during the Roman Wars it was a case of conflict between an agricultural people, poorly

¹ Merrill's *Galilee*, p. 70.

disciplined for sustained warfare, and the finest military power the world has known. Yet these Galilean Jews fought with splendid courage and persistency, and it took Rome's best general, Vespasian, with 60,000 veterans and all the engines of war available, to reduce the province to submission. The conquest of Galilee was one of the toughest bits of work Rome had to do, and the story of it is crowded with deeds of heroic resistance and exceptional bravery. It was Eleazar of Galilee, captain of the Sicarii and leader of the defence of Masada, who boasted, "We were the first of all in revolt (against the Romans), and we were the last arms against them."

There is a general impression that the Jews of Jerusalem held their brethren of Galilee in dislike and contempt, and, on the strength of this, Galilee has been described as the home of religious ignorance and indifference. The Judæans may well have entertained such feelings, without there being any good reason for them. One ground of scorn is said to have been difference of dialect. There certainly was a peculiarity in the Galilean pronunciation of the gutturals, which is simply noted without further comment in the Jerusalem Talmud. The Galileans did not distinguish between He

and Cheth, or between Aleph and Ayin. But there is no evidence of anything amounting to a dialectical difference. Hebrew was spoken in Jerome's day at Tiberias with noted purity. In the story of Peter at the trial of Jesus, there is neither contempt nor ridicule implied in what is said about his speech.

Then the Judæans are said to have looked down upon the Galileans because of unorthodoxy. As a matter of fact, the Galileans had a much greater reverence for the Law than the Judæans. Munk's statement that the people of Galilee manifested less aversion to the religion and manners of the heathen than the people of the south may very well be true. But when he goes on to say that they had less zeal for the religion of Moses, his statement can hardly be accepted. "Adherence to the strict letter of the *Law* may be regarded as a prominent characteristic of the learned men of Galilee in distinction from those of Jerusalem,"¹ who were champions of *Tradition*. Galilee was thoroughly well supplied with synagogues, schools and teachers, and "it is one of the most singular revolutions even in Jewish history that the province which, through so many centuries, Judæa had contemned as profane and heretical,

Charge of
unortho-
doxy.

¹ Merrill's *Galilee*, p. 86.

should succeed Judæa as the sanctuary of the race and the home of their theological schools.”¹ The statement quoted in St. John’s Gospel (vii. 52), “out of Galilee ariseth no prophet,” is manifestly untrue, if the reference be to past history, for Galilee could look back upon a succession of personages as distinguished and of events as memorable as any that Judæa or Samaria could adduce.

¹ G. A. S., pp. 424–25.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS AND HISTORICAL SITES

(a) The Principal Divisions of the Province

THE Maritime Plain of Galilee extends from the Kasimiyeh to Carmel. Its northern portion, forming the Plain of Tyre, 13 miles long by about a mile broad, ends at Ras el Abiad, the Album Promontorium or White Cape of the Crusaders. Along this line of coast, the most prominent feature is the artificial promontory on which ancient Tyre stood, projecting a mile into the sea and connected with the mainland by an isthmus half a mile broad. This northern strip of coast is not very fertile, though there are gardens of vegetables and fruit between Tyre and Ras el Ain. Further south, from Ras el Abiad to Ras en Nakurah or Scala Tyriorum ('the Ladder of Tyre'), a distance of six miles, the mountains reach almost and in places quite down to the sea. At the Ras or headland itself,

The
Maritime
Plain.

they form lofty white cliffs, across which the road climbs by a series of steps cut (according to Maundrell) by order of Alexander the Great. The Plain of Acre begins at Ras en Nakurah and extends south to Carmel, 20 miles distant. The coast-line, straight as far as Akka or Acre, recedes between Acre and Carmel into a bay about 8 miles long and varying in depth from 1 to 3 miles. The plain north of Acre is fertile and well watered, but neglected. South of Acre there are extensive swamps round the mouths of the Namein and Mukutta. The rest of the plain is a noted pasture-ground. The coast at Haifa consists of a narrow corn plain, half a mile wide, extending to the very foot of Carmel.

Upper
Galilee.

The hills to the east of the Maritime Plain are, in Upper Galilee, mostly spurs from the western watershed; in Lower Galilee, ends of the parallel ranges running east and west. In Upper Galilee they gradually increase in height till a first or outer watershed is reached. Inside this western watershed are the upland plains between the wadies Selukieh and Hajeir. East of these again comes the second or main watershed, with summits rising at Marun er Ras to 3000 ft. These eastern mountains overlook and fall away steeply towards the Upper Jordan

and the Merj Ayun or mouth of the valley dividing Lebanon from Anti-Lebanon. The highest of all the summits is Jebel Jermuk (3934 ft.). In the central parts of this northern block of hills the land is better cultivated than almost any in Galilee. Olive-presses are to be seen all over the hilltops, and there are large numbers of sarcophagi, rock-cut tombs, rude figures carved in the rocks, millstones and cisterns. Stone-built villages and villages of mud huts are scattered over the whole district.

The line of separation between Upper and Lower Galilee runs from the Plain of Acre along wadies Halzun, Shaib, Khashab, Nimr, Said, Maktul and Amud to the north-west shore of Gennesaret. This line forms the northern boundary of Lower Galilee, which is limited on the south by the southern edge of Esdraelon and the Vale of Jezreel. "The difference in altitude between this region and Upper Galilee is relatively considerable; for while the latter nearly attains to a height of 4000 ft., the hills of Lower Galilee never rise to 2000 ft. The general features of the uplands of Lower Galilee are also very different from Upper Galilee. They present a succession of parallel ranges divided by broad plains, the ranges running between east and west with a slight bend

towards the north.”¹ For example, there is the Shaghur range on the north, skirting the Plain of Buttauf; south of this and of Buttauf, the range of Toran running past Kurn Hattin as far east as the shores of the Lake; the Nazareth group of hills, with its western, central and eastern divisions; and the Jebel Duhy or Little Hermon range, which is almost entirely within the basin of the Jordan. The opposing slopes of these cross ranges sometimes combine to form upland plains like those of Rameh, Arrabeh and Ahma. “Beautiful woodlands deck the scenery on the south-west slopes. Broad and open downs, bare and monotonous even when rocky, meet the wearied eye on the south-east.”² The springs of the district are good and numerous. In the “Holy Places visited by Antoninus Martyr,” the country about Nazareth is described as like a park for beauty, and like Egypt in the matter of corn and produce. “But it excels in wine and oils, fruits and honey. Millet too is there unnaturally tall, higher than the stature of a tall man.” The Plain of Buttauf is one of the most fertile in the whole province, almost rivalling the “Golden Plain,” as Toran was

¹ Trelawney Saunders' *Introduction to the Survey of Western Palestine*, p. 199.

² Trelawney Saunders' *Introduction*, p. 214.

called on account of the richness of its produce.

Prominent among the ruins of Galilee are those of the ancient synagogues. Nine out of the eleven known examples in Palestine have been carefully examined and described by the English explorers. These are at Nebratein, el Jish, Kefr Birim, Meiron, Umm el Amud, Irbid, Tell Hum and Kerazeh. The remains are scanty at most of the sites, but sufficient taken together to enable a reconstruction of one of these ancient buildings to be made. Rectangular in shape, with their longer sides running north and south, the Galilean synagogues were mostly divided into five aisles by four rows of columns. The entrances were at the south end, three in number as a rule,—a large one, giving admittance to the central aisle, with a smaller one on each side of it. The door-posts had peculiar architrave mouldings. On the lintels over the doors was a variety of ornamentation. At Nebratein, for instance, there was a Hebrew inscription and a representation of the seven-branched candlestick. The capitals of the pillars vary in style, being sometimes Corinthian, sometimes Ionic, oftener of a peculiar form, apparently Jewish. The building material is chiefly native limestone, though in one or two instances basalt has been

Ruined
syna-
gogues.

used. Kitchener assigns all these Galilean synagogues to the years between 150 and 300 A.D. If this be a correct surmise, they can hardly be the work of the Rabbi Simeon bar Jochai (120 A.D.), who is said to have built, at his own expense, as many as twenty-four synagogues.

Function of
the syna-
gogue.

After the Exile, the supremely important thing for every true Jew was to know and to practise the Law. Only in this way could the favour of God be enjoyed. In order that this knowledge might be attained, the Law had to be brought nearer to each learner every year of his life. Careful instruction therefore began in the family, was continued in the school, and carried on towards completion, throughout life, by means of the regular synagogue services. The object of the synagogue was thus not so much worship, as instruction in the Law. Its chief function was to teach. Founded in the years immediately following the reforms of Ezra, for the benefit of Jews who could seldom visit the Temple at Jerusalem, this institution had become naturalised and widely extended in Christ's day, so much so that probably every town and almost every village had its own synagogue or synagogues. In the cities there would be many such buildings, distinguished

often by special emblems. They seem to have been built frequently on the highest suitable position in the town, though occasionally they were to be found outside the village and near a river or the seashore, for facilities of ablution.

In purely Jewish towns, jurisdiction both civil and religious was usually centred in a single body of officials. The elders of the place were very often also the elders of the synagogue. The synagogue officials were entrusted with the care of the building and of the services, together with the power of excommunication. The *Ruler of the Synagogue* or head of the college of elders had supervision of the other officers, general oversight of affairs, and certain special duties in relation to the services—in particular, the appointment of suitable persons to pray, read and expound. The *Almoner's* business was simply to collect and dispense the alms of the worshippers, their gifts of money and goods. The *Minister* had to bring out and then return to their proper place the sacred rolls used at the services, to instruct the children in reading, and also to carry out sentences of scourging. At the extreme eastern end of every synagogue was the closet where the rolls were kept, wrapped in linen cloths and laid in a case. Somewhere nearer the middle of the building was the raised

Officials of
the syna-
gogue.

Services.

platform with reading-desk, for the appointed reader or preacher, and not far away hung the lamp that was never allowed to go out. The congregation sat (except during the prayer), men and women apart, the most distinguished persons usually in the front seats. The service consisted of four parts: (1) recitation of the Shema¹ or Confession of Faith, preceded and followed by the benediction; (2) prayer, recited by one of the congregation chosen for the purpose, the worshippers responding; (3) reading of the Law and the Prophets, accompanied by translation into Aramaic, and followed by such explanation and application as was deemed suitable;² and (4) blessing, pronounced by a priestly member of the congregation, the worshippers responding with 'Amen.' There were two services every Sabbath,—one in the morning and one in the afternoon,—and a service on the second and fifth days of each week, in the evening.

¹ The Shema consisted of Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21; Num. xv. 37-41.

² The reader could choose his own portion of the Prophets, which were read at the Sabbath *morning* service only, but not of the Law, which was read at *every* service.

(b) The Historical Sites of the Province

In the northern half of Upper Galilee there are only very few places of recognised historic interest. The three that call for special description are Tyre, Cæsarea Philippi and Laish or Dan.

To reach the beginnings of Tyre it is necessary ^{Tyre.} to go back in thought across not fewer than 4000 years, if the statement of the priests of Melkarth to Herodotus be true. The Phœnician word Sûr or Sôr means 'rock,' and the place got this name from the rocky islands upon which it was originally built. There were two Tyres, through a long period of history— ^{General description.} Tyre proper, on the larger and smaller islands, and Palætyrus, thought by many to have been a continental overflow of Tyre, which spread itself along and across the plain, due east of the islands, with the rock Mashuk as its centre or acropolis. Others, however, after careful examination of the evidence, place Palætyrus in the vicinity of Tell Habish and Ras el Ain, a little to the south of the former site. Alexander the Great built a causeway between the city and the mainland, which has since been widened to about a quarter of a mile by the continual accumulation of sand. This causeway gave rise

to the two ports of Tyre—the Sidonian on the north, the Egyptian on the south. The total area enclosed on the islands was about 200 acres.

Its
antiquities.

The antiquities of Tyre are the walls, the harbour and the cathedral. The walls surrounded the whole rocky island or islands on which the ancient city stood. They are easily traceable on the south and west. Their masonry belongs to the Crusading period, being similar to that of Askalon and Arsuf. The present harbour is the old Sidonian port, facing north. The old Egyptian harbour on the south side of the isthmus has been traced out by Colonel Conder and Lieutenant Mantell. The cathedral ruins stand on the highest part of the island, probably in the centre of the ancient city. In all likelihood, on the same spot was built the older and more famous temple of Melkarth, the Tyrian sun-god. The cathedral, dating from the latter half of the twelfth century, was one of the most beautiful of the many churches erected by the Crusaders.

Its history.

About 450 B.C. Herodotus visited Tyre, and the priests of Melkarth told him that their city had been founded 2300 years before—that is, about 2750 B.C. Josephus' statement that "from the building of Tyre to the building

of the Temple¹ (of Solomon) there had passed 240 years," points to a much later date. The first clear evidence of a flourishing condition is derived from the account of the relations between Hiram and David. Hiram provided David with materials and workmen for the building of his palace. This same Hiram or a successor bearing the same name supplied cedar-trees and fir-trees of Lebanon, together with artisans, for the building of Solomon's Temple. Later on, Ahab, king of Israel, married a daughter of the reigning Tyrian king, and there was a close alliance between Phœnicia and Israel. In Ezekiel's time Tyre had become replenished, probably after the Assyrian attacks, and was once more glorious in the heart of the seas. Her builders had perfected her beauty and made her strong to resist assault. She was accordingly able to hold out for nineteen years against the attacks of Nebuchadrezzar, and in the end make honourable terms with her opponent. Alexander's siege in 332 B.C. lasted seven months. Tyre was still stately, strong and beautiful, filled full with ships and noise of oars, and singing of the merchantmen, when our Lord paid His flying visit from the Lake-shore to its borders, healing the daughter of the Syro-

¹ *Circa* 962 B.C.

Phœnician woman. Soon after this visit, a little Christian community began to spring up, which Paul visited on his return from the third missionary journey. In 638 A.D. Tyre was captured by the Mohammedans, who held it for some five hundred years, until it fell into the hands of the Crusaders. To-day "the city of the Crusaders lies beneath several feet of débris: below it are what remains of Mohammedan and early Christian Tyre. Tyre of the Phœnicians, if any of it still remains, lies below these ruins." Such facts recall the words of ancient prophecy: "I will make thee a destruction, and thou shalt be no more; and thou shalt be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord." And once more: "I will make thee a bare rock: thou shalt be a place for the spreading of nets: thou shalt be built no more."

Cæsarea
Philippi.

One of the most picturesque localities in Palestine is the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi at the fountains of the Jordan and under the shadow of Hermon. The modern town on the site of ancient Cæsarea is called Banias. After crossing an old Roman bridge spanning a deep gorge, "through a tangle of trees, brushwood and fern, you break into sight of a high cliff of limestone reddened by the

water that oozes over its face from the iron soil above. In the cliff is a cavern. Part of the upper rock has fallen, and from the débris of boulders and shingle below there bursts and bubbles along a line of 30 ft. a full-born river. The place is a very sanctuary of waters, and from time immemorial men have drawn near it to worship.”¹ This place may be the Baal-gad mentioned in Josh. xi. 17. It must have been a noted centre of Baal worship. The Greeks dedicated the cave to Pan and the Nymphs, calling hill, cave and spring τὸ Πάνειον [Paneion], and the town with its district Πανεάς [Paneas] or Πανιάς [Panias].

Cæsarea Philippi is chiefly memorable as the Its history. scene of our Lord’s retreat with His disciples from Jewish hostility in the Lake cities. It was here that Jesus asked the question, “Who say ye that I am?” Here, in response to this appeal, Peter made his great confession, “Thou art the Christ.” Not far away, a few nights later, Jesus was transfigured on one of the higher slopes of Hermon, and received that access of divine strength which enabled Him to face even the agonies of the Cross, for us men and for our salvation. Later on, Cæsarea Philippi became the seat of a bishopric, while

¹ G. A. S., p. 474.

its castle, Kalat es Subeibeh, played an important part during the Crusades.

Journeys of
our Lord.

We read of several journeys taken by Jesus with the disciples in Galilee during the months of His northern ministry. One was to the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus "arose and went away from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis." To reach Sidon He would travel by the shore-road past Surafend, the N.T. Sarepta, and the O.T. Zarephath of Elijah. Another journey was among the towns and villages of the hill-country on the west of the Lake, to preach in the synagogues. A third journey was the one to the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi, referred to above.

Dan.

Dr. G. A. Smith contends that, inasmuch as the meadows and springs of the Upper Jordan could not be held by any force that did not also hold Banias and its castle, Dan or Laish or Leshem is the present Banias, and not, as so many say, Tell-el-Kadi, the richly wooded mound rising 60 ft. above the plain a few miles west of Banias. The one strong argument for Tell-el-Kadi is the fact that the names Kadi and Dan have the same meaning, namely "judge." Against this identification, however,

is the circumstance mentioned above, and the extreme suitability of Banias to become the chief town of the district. The ancients and mediævals seem to have placed Dan at Banias.¹ Whether it be Banias or the Tell, Dan has been the scene of some memorable events in early Jewish history. When Abraham heard that his brother Lot was taken captive by Chedorlaomer and the allies, he led forth his 318 trained men and pursued the captors as far as Laish, which in earliest times belonged to Sidon. Later on, according to the story in Judges xviii., the migration of the Danites from Zorah and Eshtaol to this northern corner of the land took place. The 600 fighting men of the tribe seized, rebuilt and then inhabited Laish, calling it Dan after the name of their ancestor. Here the image stolen from the sanctuary of Micah the Ephraimite was set up, Jonathan ben Gershom being established as priest. Later still, Jeroboam made Bethel in the south and Dan in the north chief centres of the so-called calf worship which he encouraged.² There is

¹ See G. A. S., p. 473 note.

² The word rendered "calf" means "a young bull" just arrived at maturity. The bulls worshipped at Bethel and Dan were probably of wood overlaid with gold, life-sized or larger, and symbols of Jehovah. This form of worship seems to have sprung from religious tendencies among the Hebrews

no mention of the place in Scripture later than the time of Benhadad's invasion, in the days of Baasha, when the store cities of Naphtali were smitten.

Hazor.

From the narrative in Joshua xi., it appears that Hazor was an important Canaanite city of the north. 'Jabin,' the name of its king, appears to be a dynastic as well as a personal name. Many writers place Hazor at a ruined site in the neighbourhood of Jebel Hadireh, near Kedesh, on the heights above the Waters of Merom. Colonel Conder thinks it may with equal possibility be found further south at Hazzur. There are two letters to the king of Egypt from Hazor, among the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, in one of which the king's name appears to be given as I-eba-enu (= Jabin).

Kedesh.

The Kedesh just mentioned is by some believed to be the Kedesh-Naphtali from which Barak was summoned by Deborah. It seems at least equally likely that Barak came out from the southern Kadish, on the western borders of

themselves, though it may have been stimulated by what was seen in Egypt. "Among an agricultural people there could be no more natural symbol of strength and vital energy than the young bull." This bull symbolism always tended rapidly to degenerate into bull worship. Consequently Hosea denounces it strongly. Bulls appear to have been worshipped at Gilgal and Beersheba as well as at Bethel and Dan.

Gennesaret, where the forces of Naphtali and Zebulun were first called together, and close to the spot where Heber the Kenite had pitched his tent.

In the southern half of Upper Galilee, places of general historic interest become more numerous—in particular, places that rose to prominence during the Roman Wars.

Akka or Acre, the Acco of the O.T. and the Acre. Ptolemais of the N.T., situated at the northern extremity of its own bay, commanded the coast-road from north to south, and was thus a place of strategic importance during the wars of Syrians and Egyptians. It lay within the ideal borders of Asher, but was never held by that tribe. "Asher drove not out the inhabitants of Acco nor the inhabitants of Zidon nor of Ahlab nor of Achzib, etc.; but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land." Paul, in the course of a voyage from Tyre, spent a day at Ptolemais with the brethren who dwelt there. In 1104 A.D. Baldwin I. captured the city, and from that time it became the principal landing-place of the Crusaders in Palestine. When the Knights of St. John settled at Acre, after Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem, they called the place St. Jean d'Acre. From Acre access was easy to

the principal routes leading eastward across the hills of Lower Galilee and along the Valley of Esdraelon.

Achzib. Eight and a half miles north of Acre is Ez Zib, the Achzib of Judges i. and the Arce or Ecdippa of Josephus. It was one of the creeks close by which Asher abode, and must be distinguished from Achzib in the Shephelah, a city of Judah. The present village is described as "a mere huddle of glaring huts on one of the highest eminences of the sandy sea-wall."

Gabara. Gabara, though not mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, rose to a position of considerable importance in the time of the Roman Wars. Vespasian marched first upon Gabara and Jotapata, when he began the conquest of Galilee. The former place was quickly taken and burnt, being insufficiently fortified. The entire population of the fortress was precipitated over the walls, to avenge the recent defeat of the Romans before Jerusalem. The unfortunate inhabitants of the whole district suffered an equally hard fate, for they were either cruelly butchered or sold into slavery.

Gischala. The Gischala of Josephus (or Gush Chaleb of the Talmud) is by common consent identified with el Jish, 11 miles west of Huleh.

Ahlab of Judges i. 31 is often also placed at el Jish. But Ahlab was a town of Asher, and probably lay much nearer the seacoast. The name Gischala, if it be 'gush chaleb,' or 'fat soil,' bespeaks the fertility of the region. The place gained notoriety for its production of oil, as well as for its brave resistance to the Roman army. Many wealthy Jews resided there, foremost among them being John ben Levi, afterwards leader of the Zealots right to the bitter end of the struggle. Gischala was one of the last places to be attacked by the Romans. It could not possibly hold out. So John asked for twenty-four hours' truce before surrender. The Roman general granted the request; and while the armies waited, in the night-time John with many thousands of his followers escaped from the city and rode away to Jerusalem. On the next day, when the inhabitants threw open the gates, Titus learned what had happened and ordered the fugitives to be hotly pursued. It was too late, however, and they succeeded in reaching Jerusalem. Part of the wall of Gischala was broken down, and a Roman garrison placed in the city for security.

As Gischala was noted for its oil, Safed was *Safed*. celebrated for its honey. It stood in the midst of a very rich district, and later on became one

of the four sacred cities of the Jews—the others being Jerusalem, Hebron and Tiberias. If Stanley be correct in identifying the Horns of Hattin with the Mount of the Beatitudes, then Safed may well be the “city set upon an hill” to which Christ likened His true disciples.

In Lower Galilee, above the line of Esdraelon, there are at least seven places of considerable interest and importance. These are Nazareth, Cana, Jotapata, Sepphoris, and the villages on the Neby Duhy or Little Hermon range. Nazareth, now en Nasirah, the capital of the district, was the flower of Galilee, according to an early letter. “The appearance of the little town, especially in spring, when its dazzling white walls are embosomed in a green framework of cactus-hedges, fig and olive trees, is very pleasing.”¹ It lies in a basin on the southern slope of Jebel es Sikh, from the edge of which a wonderful view opens out. You can see for thirty miles in three directions. The historic Plain of Esdraelon lies spread out in front, backed by Carmel and the Samaritan hills. To the west is the blue line of the Mediterranean, while on the east can be seen the Jordan Valley with the hills of Gilead rising beyond.

Nazareth is not mentioned either in the O.T.

¹ Socin's *Syria* (Baedeker), p. 244.

or by Josephus. This fact, together with the enquiry of Nathanael in John i. 46, has caused the place often to be described as obscure, isolated and insignificant. Instead of that, it probably contained, at the beginning of the present era, not fewer than 15,000 inhabitants. It also lay close to the main highways of the province, and was built upon a hill, well known throughout all the district and visible even from Samaria and the Mediterranean Sea. Roads led out from it in all directions, and it was not far from Sepphoris, for a long time the capital of Galilee. Thus Nazareth was continually in connection with the great centres of trade and of information and of busy life. "A vision of all the kingdoms of the world was as possible from this village as from the mount of temptation." Midianite caravans, Roman legionaries, travellers of every rank and pursuit, people from all parts of the civilised world, would pass and repass along the main routes that lay within sight of the Nazareth hill. These facts should be remembered in forming a picture of the scenery and conditions in the midst of which our Lord spent the years of His boyhood and early manhood. As might be expected, Nazareth became a favourite place for Christian pilgrims, especially during the Middle Ages. About the

year 600 A.D. there was a large basilica in the town. The Crusaders added several more churches to the buildings already in existence. Antoninus Martyr, writing of Nazareth, says that "the beauty of the women in the city is so great that no more beautiful women are to be found among the Hebrews. And though the Hebrews have no love for Christians, yet these women are all full of charity for them."

Cana.

On the northern edge of Sahel Buttauf¹ and due south of Jotapata is the ruin of Kanah ('the Place of Reeds'), which, according to ancient tradition and in the opinion of the Crusaders, represents Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle, whence Nathanael of the Gospels came, where also Josephus abode for a time. But another locality further east, the village called Kefr Kenna, five miles north-east of Nazareth and on the direct road thence to the Lake, has a good deal in its favour and may well be the true site. At the south end of this village is a copious fountain of clear water, and there are traces of extensive ruins. Early Christian tradition favours this identification. Col. C. R. Conder has suggested a place $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Nazareth, near Reineh, where

¹ Called the Plain of Zebulun in ancient times, and known to the Greeks and Romans as Asochis.

there is a fine spring called Ain Kanah. The references to Cana in Jewish literature are so few and the data for localisation contained in the references are so scanty that its position is likely to remain an unsettled question.¹

Among the hills, in a northern defile of Buttauf, is the fortress of Jotapata, the present ^{Jotapata.} Khan Jefat, so heroically held by Josephus and the Galileans against the forces and engines of Vespasian. The ruins are on the flat, rocky top of a high and precipitous hill, which is cut off from the surrounding hills on every side, except the north, where there is a low connecting saddle. The only entrance was across this narrow saddle, which was protected by a high wall, bristling with weapons of defence. Against this approach, Vespasian concentrated the whole weight of his attack. In spite, however, of his sixty storming engines with their stream of stones, spears, and slings containing combustible matter, his battering ram and the fierce onslaughts of his soldiers, the Galileans held their ground for forty days. They had plenty of corn and other necessities; but there was unfortunately a scarcity of water, which gave the besiegers an advantage. The

¹ In D. B., vol. i. p. 347, the Rev. W. Ewing says that the balance of evidence is in favour of the northern site—Kh. Kanah.

end came through the treachery of a Galilean who gave information to Vespasian which enabled him to surprise the garrison, about the hour of daybreak. His soldiers put the watch to the sword, and quietly took possession of the city. Forty thousand Jews are said to have perished in the siege. The place was entirely demolished and all the fortifications burned down. The fall of Jotapata sealed the fate of Galilee; and when Galilee was subdued, the back of the Jewish rebellion was broken.

Japhia.

During the last days of the siege of Jotapata, Japhia (now Jafa), near Nazareth, had been captured and its inhabitants sold into slavery. This is the Japhia of Josh. xix. 12, on the borders of Zebulun. Socin mentions a tradition in the Middle Ages that the house of Zebedee and his sons, James and John, was situated here.

Sepphoris.

Sepphoris (Seffurieh) is the Zippori of the Talmud and the Diocæsarea of the Romans. It may also be the Kitron of Judg. i. 30, from which Zebulun failed to drive out the Canaanites. There are numerous ruins about the village, which lies on the south-west side of the hill. The remains belonging to later times are the Crusaders' Church and the Castle, while, dating from the Roman period, there are tombs,

sarcophagi and an aqueduct. Sepphoris was rebuilt by Herod Antipas, and soon became one of the largest and strongest cities in the north. Before Tiberias rose to pre-eminence, it was the principal place in Galilee, inhabited by wealthy citizens, and situated in the midst of a rich and very fruitful district, celebrated for grains and fruits. When Tiberias became capital, Sepphoris was degraded in rank. But in the time of Agrippa II. it was once more elevated above Tiberias and became the depository of the public archives and a royal magazine of arms. In the later Crusading period, Sepphoris was frequently the gathering-place of armies. The Christian forces, consisting of 2000 knights, 8000 foot-soldiers and large bodies of archers—the finest army ever led out against Saladin in Palestine—assembled here before the battle of Hattin, July 5, 1187. that memorable conflict, which resulted in the complete destruction of the Crusading host and the downfall of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

On the southernmost group of the Galilean hills, the Jebel Duhy range, are at least three places of some historic interest. This range of hills, the Little Hermon of the Crusading chroniclers, lies almost wholly within the basin of the Jordan. Only the north-west slopes of Neby Duhy send their waters into the Mukutta

Shunem

basin. On the south-west slope lies the village of Sôlam, the ancient Shunem, belonging to the tribe of Issachar. Here the Philistines mustered before the battle with Saul on Gilboa. To Shunem also belonged Abishag, who ministered to David in his extreme old age. Later on, Elisha paid a visit to the village, and was hospitably entertained by a woman of position, who afterwards set aside a room in her house for his convenience. When her son died of sunstroke, the prophet came from Carmel and restored him. The form 'Solam' (for Shunem) is found in the name of the Shulammite, in the Song of Songs (vi. 13).

Endor.

When Saul saw the host of the Philistines arrayed against him opposite Gilboa, we are told that his heart failed him. So he enquired of the Lord concerning the issue of the conflict, but received no answer. Then he sought a woman that had a familiar spirit, whose dwelling was at Endor. This village lay on the north side of Neby Duhy, and though within the borders of Issachar really belonged to Manasseh. Its modern representative is a small, dirty village of miserable huts and cave-dwellings, "where wretched old women pour fanatical curses on passing Europeans." Here the sorceress to whom Saul appealed is said to have called up

the shade of Samuel for the king to consult. Endor is mentioned as early as 1600 B.C. in the lists of Thothmes III. On the way to Endor from Shunem, the traveller may visit Nein, the ^{Nain.} ancient Nain, near to whose gate Jesus raised the widow's son to life. The hill Moreh of ^{The hill} Judg. vii. 1 is generally regarded as identical ^{Moreh.} with the western end of the Little Hermon range. How far Moreh extended eastward is uncertain.

CHAPTER V

THE LAKE AND ITS CITIES

Intro-
ductory.

JEWISH writers seem scarcely to have language glowing enough in which to describe the beauties and resources of their famous Lake, with its surrounding hills and plains, its fringe of cities and villages, and its deep blue waters. Apart from its sacred associations, this sheet of water lies beautiful among the hills, "like a shining mirror in a rigid framework of purple mountains."

Clear silver water in a cup of gold,
Under the sunlit steep of Gadara,
It shines—His Lake—the Sea of Chinneroth—
The waves He loved, the waves that kissed His feet
So many blessed days.

Though the climate is almost tropical, cool breezes from the west blow across the hills of Lower Galilee, and are drawn down by the valleys that open upon the Lake, tempering the fierce heat of the summer sun, and making life endurable during the long, hot months of the

dry season. In the days of Christ, the shores of Gennesaret presented a reproduction in miniature of the rich life and varied activity of the province as a whole. "Imagine that wealth of water, that fertility, those great highways, that numerous population, that commerce and industry, those strong Greek influences,—imagine them all crowded into a deep valley, under an almost tropical heat and round a great blue lake, and you have before you the conditions in which Christianity arose and Christ Himself chiefly laboured."¹

The Lake has been called by many names. Sometimes, from the province within which it lay, it was named the 'Sea or Lake of Galilee.' Again, from the principal city along the western shore, it was frequently called the 'Lake or Sea of Tiberias.' In the 1st Book of the Maccabees, it appears as the 'Water of Gennesar'; in St. Luke's Gospel, as the 'Lake of Gennesaret'; and in Josephus as 'Gennesar' and 'Gennesaritis.' Probably it took the name 'Gennesaret' from the plain so called, in the north-west corner. Its O.T. name is Chinnereth, which is applied both to the Lake and to a town on its shore,—to the Lake, as some say, from its resemblance in shape to a harp.

Names of
the Lake.

¹ G. A. S., pp. 439-40.

General
description.

Gennesaret lies in a hollow between the eastern and western ranges of Palestine, and between the upper and lower reaches of the Jordan. Its surface is 682 ft. below sea-level, while the bottom probably never falls to a greater depth than 200 ft.¹ The total length is 13 miles, the greatest breadth 8 miles. At its north end, the Jordan, after falling through the long gorge that begins just below Huleh, enters quietly, forming a delta by deposit of material carried in suspension. To the east of this north corner, the Plain of Batihah extends as far as the foot of the Plateau of Gaulonitis, while on the west the hills drop down by rugged slopes to the river and the lake. Following the western shore-line southward from the point of entrance of the river for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the ruins of Tell Hum are reached. A mile and a half further is the small Plain of Tabghah or Tabighah, with its copious spring, where

The
western
shore.

Gennesaret's wave
'Delights the flowers to lave,
That o'er her western slope breathe airs of balm.

This small plain is only separated from the Plain of Gennesaret by a rocky promontory.

¹ See D. B., vol. ii., art. "Sea of Galilee," and G. A. S., Additional Notes, p. 677.

The Plain of Gennesaret or Ghuweir (as it is also called) extends south for some 3 miles, receding from each end in a curve till it has reached a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. At the north end of it are the ruins of Khan Minyeh; at the south end, the village of el Mejdel. Beyond this Land of Gennesaret the hills close in again upon the Lake, leaving only a narrow strip of shore, along which lies et Tubariya, the modern representative of Tiberias. About half an hour's walk to the south of Tubariya, the famous hot springs, the Hammath of the O.T. or Emmaus of the Greeks, are reached. "As the south end of the Lake approaches, the ribbon of coast widens, and the Jordan cuts through it, striking at first due west and then south by the foot of the hills." On a well-defined mound along the shore near the river-mouth lie the ruins of Kerak. The Ghôr or Jordan Valley here extends away eastward to a width of 4 or 5 miles and away south for some dozen miles or more to the point where it widens out into the Plain of Bethshan.

Up the eastern shore of the Lake runs the wall of limestone capped by basalt that forms the western edge of the Jaulan Plateau. Gorges, some "open and gradual," others "wild and impassable," run up from the coast into the heart of the hill-country. There is the gorge Eastern shore.

opposite Tiberias, where the ruins called Kalat el Hosn are to be seen, with Susiyeh, a little to the south-east, and Fik, a short way up the gorge. Further north still, on the left bank of the Wady es Semakh, is Khersa, the city of the Gergesenes. North of this again, and across the top of the Lake, runs the Plain of Batihah, in which about three-quarters of an hour from the shore are the extensive remains of Bethsaida Julias (El Tell).

Present
aspect of
the shores.

At present, "except for some palms lingering in Gennesaret, a scattering of thorn-bushes all round the coast, brakes of oleander on the eastern shores and small oaks up the gorges to the Jaulan Plateau, trees are not to be seen. The mountain edges are bare and so are the grey slopes to the north, lifted towards Hermon as a Scottish moor to a snowy Ben. Only one town is visible, Tiberias, now a poor fevered place of less than 5000 inhabitants; besides this, there are not more than three or four small villages round all the coast. It is well known, too, how seldom a sail is seen on the surface of the Lake."¹ Though the Lake-shores are beautifully green in the early spring, the great heat of the long summer soon scorches up all the vegetation. Even of the rich Plain

¹ G. A. S., p. 445.

of Gennesaret, which is not without evidence still of its former glory, Socin says, "The soil is extremely fertile and copiously watered by several springs, but there is hardly a tree of cultivation." In fact, of all this Lake region Sir Edwin Arnold's lines are a true description—

Dead lie His once fair fields ;
Barren the fallows where His Sower sowed ;
None reaps the silver harvests of His Sea ;
None in the wheat now roots the ill tares out.
The hungry land gasps empty in the glare ;
The vulture's self goes famished ; the wolf prowls
Fasting, amid the broken stones which built
The cities of His sojourn.

In marked contrast with all this was the state of things at the beginning of the present era. Josephus gives a somewhat full description of the Ghuweir or Land of Gennesaret. "Its nature is Ancient aspect. wonderful, as well as its beauty ; its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants accordingly plant all kinds of trees ; for the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those many sorts ; particularly walnuts, which require the coldest air, flourish there in great plenty ; there are palm-trees also, which grow best in hot air : fig-trees too and olives grow near them, which require an air more temperate. One may call this place

the ambition of nature.”¹ As late as 700 A.D. there were dense woods round some portions of the Lake, especially on the east. But the greatest contrast is in the buildings and activity of the district. Referring to this early period, Lamartine says, “The borders of the Lake of Gennesaret seem to have borne cities instead of harvests and forests.” The waters are even now encircled by a belt of ruins, the accumulated remains of many cities and towns. In Christ’s time, the Lake “must have mirrored within the outline of her guardian hills, little else than city-walls, houses, synagogues, wharves and factories.”² There were also fine gardens, fleets of sails on the Lake, and a busy, crowded population of workers and pleasure-seekers along the shores. We know the names of at least nine cities round the coast-line, and there were many more towns and villages on the hills and hillsides.

Chorazin.

The nine cities of the Lake, beginning in the north-west and passing down the western coast, are Chorazin, Capernaum, Magdala, Tiberias, Taricheæ, Hippos, Gamala, Gergesa and Bethsaida. The position of Chorazin can hardly be regarded as beyond dispute. In all probability it was at the present ruins of Kerazeh, about

¹ Josephus, iii. *Wars*, x. 8.

² G. A. S., pp. 459, 460.

2½ miles north of Tell Hum and on the left bank of a watercourse running to the Lake. There are remains here of what was once a considerable town. Walls of houses can be traced, and there are ruins of a richly ornamented synagogue. Chorazin shared with Bethsaida and Capernaum the sin of rejecting the words and mighty works of Jesus. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and in ashes."

Two principal sites have been proposed for ^{Capernaum.} Capernaum, the home of Jesus during His Galilean ministry, viz. Tell Hum and Khan Minyeh. Tell Hum is on the shore, about three miles south-west of the point where the Jordan enters the Lake. It is also on the road leading round the north end of the Lake to the country on the eastern side. Socin holds that this identification, supported by some old itineraries of pilgrims, is as good as certain. It must be allowed that there is a strong Christian tradition from the sixth century onward in its support, and that the position suits the requirements of a busy city of customs and of commerce. But the balance of evidence appears to lie with Khan Minyeh. The tradition in its favour is nearly

as old, it suits well all the references in Josephus and the N.T., there are remains of an ancient city between the Khan and the shore as well as on the adjoining Tell, and it is upon the great northern road as well as on its eastern branch. At et Tabghah close by are several springs, one of which is the largest in Galilee and might well be the fountain referred to by Josephus. So we may almost venture to fix Capernaum "at that north-east corner of fair Gennesaret where the waves beat now on an abandoned shore, but once there was a quay and a busy town, and the great road from east to west poured its daily stream of life."¹ All the same, it is disappointing not to find more traces of and clearer evidence for the exact locality of a place so closely associated with the active ministry of our Lord. For here He was "at home." Here He taught frequently in the synagogue, and did very many of His works. It was in a house at Capernaum that He took a little child, and, setting him in the midst, made him the text of an address on the true spirit of discipleship. When we realise how little trace is left of this sacred city, our Lord's own words come to mind: "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades."

¹ G. A. S., p. 456.

The Plain of Gennesaret ends on the south at **Magdala**, the village of el Mejdal, possibly the Magdala or Magadan of Matt. xv. 39.¹ The name 'Magdala' or 'Migdal' means "tower" or "strong place," and there are several Migdals mentioned in the Talmud. There seems to be no good reason for doubting that this small town near the mouth of the wady Hamâm is also the birthplace of Mary, surnamed Magdalene, out of whom our Lord cast seven devils.

At this southern end of the Plain of Gennesaret, the hills recede westward, while the valley of the Hamâm runs up among them as far as Hattin, and even beyond Hattin to Lubieh. In the gorge of the Hamâm lie the ruins of Irbid, the ancient Arbela. Hosea apparently refers to Arbela when he speaks of Shalman spoiling Beth-arbel in the day of battle. The precipitous sides of this wonderful gorge rise 1200 ft. and are perforated with caves, communicating with each other by hidden passages. These are probably the caves mentioned by Josephus as hiding-places of robbers, who lived there "like eagles in their eyries," and whom Herod the Great crushed, in B.C. 39, by letting his soldiers

¹ In Mark viii. 10 the place of Magadan is taken by Dalmanutha.

down the face of the cliffs in baskets.¹ It seems doubtful whether Irbid is the site of the Arbela of 1 Macc. ix. 2, mentioned in connection with the advance of Bacchides upon Jerusalem from the north, in 161 B.C.

The Horns
of Hattin.

Stanley makes Kurn Hattin (1038 ft.) the scene of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. "The situation so strikingly coincides with the intimations of the Gospel narrative as almost to force the inference that in this instance the eye of those who selected the spot (the Crusaders) was for once rightly guided." The plain of Hattin is easily accessible from the Lake, the platform on the top is suitable for the assembling of a multitude, and the region is central for peasants from the hill-country and fishermen from the Lake-shores. Dr. Wright has aptly named Hattin "the Sinai of the Gospel," and it is interesting to recall the fact that, many centuries later, on this very spot "the proudest spirits of Christendom" assembled and fought, "scattering His land with slain" who came to bring peace, not a sword.

In steel and gold, splendid and strong and fierce,
Host after host under that Mount has marched

¹ See Josephus, i. *Wars*, xvi. 4. Tristram gained access to them in the same way.

Where He sat saying: Blessèd the peace-makers!
In rage and hatred host with host has clashed
There where He taught, "Love ye your enemies"!

The principal city of the Lake-shore was Tiberias. Tiberias, now Tubariya. Though Capernaum and Tarichæ may have been as important commercially, they came far behind Tiberias in grandeur of architecture, luxury of life and political influence. An ancient town called Rakkath possibly occupied the site in the earliest times. Lying on a narrow strip of coast between shore and mountains, with a hill capable of being fortified immediately behind, it was an attractive situation for such a city as Herod Antipas desired to build. So here he spent large sums of money in the erection and embellishment of a stately city, calling it Tiberias, after the name of the emperor with whom he was in high favour. Though there were probably a few Jews among the earliest inhabitants of the new city, it presented few attractions at first for true sons of Israel. It had become defiled by the uncovering of human remains when the foundations were being laid, and in addition was full of Roman adornment and heathen images. So Herod was obliged to people it mainly with "foreigners, adventurers and beggars." Tiberias must have

been a very stately city, with its palace, its forum, its racecourse, its synagogue which was reputed to be the finest in the north, and its acropolis (the mount of Kasr Bint el Melek, rising to a height of about 580 ft. above the Lake) within a surrounding wall of its own as well as within the city wall, which ran to a length of about three miles and was defended by strong towers.

Later
History.

The only N.T. mention of Tiberias is in the Fourth Gospel (John vi. 23). There is no evidence that Jesus ever visited the place. Some think He shared the abhorrence of the orthodox Jew for a city that was newly built, thoroughly Gentile, and unclean from its very foundation. More likely He felt that His work could be better done elsewhere, that His mission lay more particularly among the inhabitants of the distinctively Jewish cities and villages of the province. During the Roman War, Josephus fortified Tiberias against Vespasian. In spite of its defences, however, when the Romans approached the place, the inhabitants in fear threw open the gates and met their conqueror with acclamations of joy, calling him saviour and benefactor. Vespasian spared their lives and contented himself with breaking down the south wall. After the fall of Jerusalem in

70 A.D. Tiberias became the chief seat of the nation—the place of its Sanhedrim and the home of its Talmudic schools. Although there were bishops of Tiberias as early as the fifth century, Christianity made but little progress on this intensely Jewish soil. The place was conquered by Saladin in 1187, after the battle of Hattin, and from 1247 to the end of the seventeenth century is simply mentioned as a small town noted for its warm baths, with Arabs of the worst character among its inhabitants. It is interesting to find that, from being held accursed in the days of Herod, this powerful heathen city came to be revered as one of the four sacred cities of the Jewish race. Equally interesting and strange is the fact that while Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, where Jesus did many mighty works, have disappeared, Tiberias, which He apparently never visited, still survives.

Reference has already been made to the warm baths situated about half an hour to the south of Tiberias. They are still used by patients troubled with rheumatism and cutaneous diseases, who come from all parts of Syria, chiefly in the months of June and July, and remain often for many weeks, living in tents on the plain. There are four springs with a temperature of 144°

Baths of
Tiberias.

Fahrenheit. The space immediately surrounding these baths was, and is still, neutral ground among the hostile tribes of the surrounding country. Josephus, in the old days, granted permission to his enemy, John of Gischala, to come down and use the hot springs for the benefit of his health, though as a matter of fact John was only feigning sickness in order to pursue his own political ends. These baths were famous throughout the whole Roman world, and no doubt increased the popularity and importance of the city to which they belonged.

Taricheæ.

According to the English explorers, Kerak at the south end of the Lake is almost certainly *Taricheæ*, a place frequently mentioned by Josephus and of equal importance with Tiberias, during the years immediately preceding and following the life of our Lord. It is certainly strange that no mention is made of this city in the Gospels. "But if the town really lay at the south-west corner of the Lake, we must remember that the district never seems to have been visited by our Lord and His disciples. Perhaps it was out of the way of those main roads which they selected for their journeys, and yet not solitary enough to afford them a retreat."¹

¹ G. A. S., p. 455. The reader should consult Dr. Smith's account of this city, on pp. 451-55.

Though Colonel Conder, Dr. G. A. Smith, and others in our own country, together with Guthe, Schürer, and Buhl in Germany, all agree in locating Taricheæ at Kerak, many able explorers and scholars place it north of Tiberias at Mejdél.

On the eastern shores of Gennesaret, Hippos, ^{Hippos.} a city of the Decapolis, guarded the great north road running between Scythopolis and Damascus. Since the investigations of Schumacher it has been placed at Susiyeh, the Arabic equivalent of the Greek Hippos. Hippos was occasionally the residence of Agrippa II. and gained notoriety during the Roman War.¹ A little further northwest are the ruins of Kula'at el Hosn, which are usually identified with the ancient Gamala. Gamala offered heroic resistance to the ^{Gamala.} soldiery of Vespasian. It was an exceedingly strong place naturally, even stronger than Jotapata, and called 'Gamala' from its likeness in shape to a camel. The story of the siege is

¹ Dr. Merrill places Hippos at Fik. In the additions to the 4th edition of G. A. S. (p. 678), the author says, "More probably Kula'at el Hosn is Hippos itself, with Aphek, now Fik, near, as described by Eusebius. The name Susiye is properly of the plain south of the gorge, 'Ard Susiye." The Aphek just mentioned was the scene of Benhadad's defeat (1 Kings xx. 26, 30), and also of a later Syrian defeat in the time of Joash (2 Kings xiii. 17).

one of the most thrilling pages of Jewish history. The Zealots held out for months against Agrippa, and when Vespasian came with his terrible fifth, tenth and fifteenth legions and his engines of war, he too was kept at bay for weeks together, until at last, as a result of the secret undermining of one of the towers, part of the walls fell down with a crash, and the Romans poured in and slew every man they met. As many as 5000 died by their own hands rather than submit to the conqueror. According to Josephus, only two women escaped out of the whole garrison. Not even the infants were spared, many of them being hurled down from the citadel.

Gergesa.

Further north still, Kersa or Gersa, on the left bank of the wady Semakh, where the hills approach the shore, is probably the site of Gergesa, the city of the Gergesenes, or Gerasenes,¹ where the demoniac was cured by Jesus. In the very fertile Plain of Batihah, on the east of Jordan and almost a mile from the Lake-side, are the ruins of what was probably the Bethsaida (= fisher-home) which Herod Philip enlarged from a fishing-village to the size and dignity of a city, calling it 'Julias' in honour of the

Bethsaida.

¹ There is no reference in this name either to Gerasa of Gilead (Jerash) or Gadara, the capital of Peræa.

daughter of Augustus. Possibly Bethsaida, the native fishing-village, was not identical with the heathen Julias, but lay nearer the shore as a kind of port or lake-side suburb of the inland city. To this eastern Bethsaida Jesus retired with His disciples, after the news reached Him of John the Baptist's death. Probably the desert place where the five thousand were fed was some little distance to the east along the shore; so that when Jesus bade His followers 'go across' to Bethsaida they would have to row back along the Lake-shore some few miles. The phrase 'go across' need not mean 'return to the *western* side of' the Lake. Bethsaida Julias lay within the limits of Galilee, which at this period included the *eastern* shores of Gennesaret. It does not, therefore, seem necessary to suppose the existence of another Bethsaida on the west, either a suburb of Julias extending across the river or a separate town at Ain Tabigha or Khan Minyeh or elsewhere.¹

This survey of the shores and cities of the Lake will convey some impression of the busy, varied life of the district, during the early years of the present era. There must have been a curious and interesting intermingling of Greco-

¹ For a different view of the case, see the new D. B. on "Bethsaida," vol. i. p. 283.

Roman civilisation and ordinary Jewish life. In the Gospels, we have the principal features of the latter vividly reflected. From the pages of Josephus, the picture may be filled in with the foreign colours. On the wharves and in the factories and yards along the western shore, a great amount of business was unceasingly carried on—here dyeing and tanning, there fish-curing or shipbuilding. Out upon the water rode fleets of fishing-boats, their occupants busily engaged in reaping the harvest of the sea. In the fields and orchards of the north-west plain, the labourers were diligently at work in the various occupations of agriculture and fruit-growing—patiently gathering in the harvest of the soil. Add to all this, the presence of Roman soldiers, foreign merchants, invalids and pleasure-seekers from near and from far, and you have some idea of the natural background of the Galilean ministry of our Lord. It was truly

a motley world

Treading th' enamelled borders, where the vines
Ran clustering, and the almond's crimson snow
Rained upon crocus, lily and cyclamen
At feet of feathery palms, and tamarisks
Alive with doves and steel-bright halcyons.

The reader of the Gospels is tempted to form a very different picture—to imagine Jesus living

and working amid the distinctively Jewish surroundings and conditions with which he is familiar in the O.T. books. But Galilee at this period was pre-eminently "a centre of Roman life, with all its luxurious accompaniments." Here were graceful temples, palaces of high officials, villas of wealthy citizens with beautiful gardens, and broad thoroughfares connecting the cities along the shore. On these broad avenues might be seen "rich merchants from Antioch and the Greek islands, traders and visitors from Damascus, Palmyra and the rich cities of the Decapolis; caravans from Egypt and Persia, Jewish rabbis jostling priests of the worship of the sun; and Roman soldiers swaggering across the market-place, where the peasantry were exposing the produce of the fields and gardens for sale, and where fish was displayed by the hardy toilers of the Lake."¹

¹ Laurence Oliphant's *Haifa*, pp. 218-21.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON

The Central
Plain of
Galilee.

THE plains of Acre and Buttauf are really parts of the one great Central Galilean Plain, of which Esdraelon forms by far the largest portion. Viewed from the eastern slopes of Carmel, this wide Plain of South Galilee extends its arms in many directions. Northward stretches the maritime Plain of Acre, along the coast, to the headland of Nakurah. Offsets of this run north-east and east, one up to the plains of Ramah and Arrabeh, and another to Buttauf, with two or three recesses of its own. Last and most important comes Esdraelon itself, extending from the gorge of the Kishon to Jenin in one direction, and from Lejjun to Tabor in the other, with important arms or bays which will be described later on. Several writers call attention to the fact that the geological formations north and south of Esdraelon are identical, and that there are still traces of connecting

ridges between the northern and southern halves of the Central Range.

Esdraelon proper is the large inland plain, ^{Esdraelon proper.} roughly triangular in shape, between Tell-el-Kasis on the west, Tabor on the east and Jenin on the south-east—these three places marking the corners of the triangle. The southern base from Tell-el-Kasis to Jenin is about 20 miles long. The northern side from the same point to the recess of Tabor measures about 15 miles, while the eastern side stretches for another 15 miles from Tabor to Jenin. The elevation of the plain at its centre is about 250 ft. Hollowed out of the very midst of the Central Range, it collects the drainage of the surrounding hills, becoming in winter “a nearly unbroken sheet of mud, extremely dangerous to cross,” while in spring-time, owing to the extreme fertility of its basaltic soil, it looks like a wide sea of green. From Jezreel, whence the whole expanse can be viewed, the appearance is that of “a free, wild prairie upon which but one or two hamlets have ventured forth from the cover of the hills, and a timid and tardy cultivation is only now seeking to overtake the waste of coarse grass and the thistly herbs that camels love.”¹

The Hebrews called Esdraelon not a ‘vale’ ^{Names of the plain.}

¹ G. A. S., p. 382.

(‘emeq) or narrow passage descending between hills, but a ‘valley’ (biq’ah) or level tract surrounded by high ground. The ‘vale’ proper in this neighbourhood is the ravine of the Jalud, running down on the east of the plain to the Jordan Valley at Bethshan, called from the town at its head, the Vale of Jezreel. This same town also gave its name to the plain, for the Greek Esdraelon and its Latin equivalents Stradela and Istradela are nothing but modifications of the Hebrew Jezreel. The plain was also called after another town on its border-line, viz. Megiddo—a fact which should be remembered in considering the claims of Lejjun to represent this oft-mentioned place of battle. Lejjun occupies a position almost as commanding in relation to the broad basin as Jezreel itself. “As Jezreel commands the mouth of the valley towards the Jordan, so Legio (Lejjun) guards the mouth of the chief pass to Sharon.” Jezreel and Legio are two of the five gateways of Esdraelon—the other three being the Kishon gorge, the glens between Tabor and Nazareth, and the “series of meadows” south of Jenin.

The plain
a famous
warpath.

When the country was divided up among the tribes, Esdraelon fell to the children of Issachar, who soon settled down to enjoy the fatness of their portion, ignobly content to become the

bond-servants of their neighbours. Issachar "saw a resting-place that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant under task-work" (Gen. xlix. 14, 15). The richness of its soil always made Esdraelon a valuable possession. At the same time, its openness in every direction and its position on a great war-path and trade route made it a difficult tract to hold and always an unsafe dwelling-place. Stanley's description of the Great Plain as one of the world's most famous battle-grounds is literally true. Few stretches of country of the same extent have witnessed the passage of so many armies, or been so frequently strewn with the bodies of the slain. Here the Hebrews suffered some of their most signal defeats and gained not a few of their most important victories. When John, the seer of Patmos, saw the kings of the whole world gathered together "unto the war of the great day of God the Almighty," the place of assembly was this very opening among the hills which drew one of its names from the place called in Hebrew Har-Magedon (= 'hill of Megiddo').

About nine miles from the Mediterranean along the road from Haifa to Jenin, the gorge of the Kishon is reached, in which lies el

Harosheth
and
Jokneam.

Harithiyeh, probably the ancient Harosheth of Judg. iv. 2. At Harosheth, Sisera pitched his camp before his famous encounter with the army of Barak. Further along the Jenin road, Tell Keimun, on the right, probably represents Jokneam, a royal Canaanite city mentioned three times in the Book of Joshua.

Site of
Megiddo.

Further on still, is the ruined Khan of el Lejjun, with a Tell close by, covered with ruins. This Khan is on the site of Legio, an important place in the fourth century A.D. It seems probable that Lejjun is also the true site of Megiddo. In favour of this identification are three facts:—(1) the mention of Megiddo and Taanach together, in several passages,¹—Taanach being the present Tannuk, four miles south-south-east of Lejjun; (2) the similarity between the names Megiddo and Mukutta (the modern name for the Kishon); and (3) the fact that Legio like Jezreel gave its name to the plain, in Roman times. Jerome, for example, calls Esdraelon both the 'Plains of Megiddo' and 'Campus Legionis.' Col. C. R. Conder argues strongly in favour of a site about four miles south-west of Bethshan, at the foot of Gilboa, viz. the village of Mujedda. He considers

¹ Such as Josh. xii. 21, xvii. 11; 1 Kings iv. 12; 1 Chron. vii. 29.

that Mujedda suits all the references in Egyptian writings and in connection with O.T. battles and sites much better than Lejjun. But, in spite of all that can be alleged in favour of this or any other place outside Esdraelon, it seems impossible to separate Megiddo from Taanach and the Kishon, or to overestimate the strategic importance of a position like Lejjun. The principal route from the Maritime Plain across Western Palestine to the Jordan Valley, in these early days, was not round the headland of Carmel, but across the low hills separating Carmel from the mountains of Samaria, by the pass opening into the plain at Lejjun. Lejjun thus guarded the entrance to Esdraelon from Sharon and the south, as Jezreel covered the approach from the Jordan Valley and the east. It lay on the main highway between Egypt and Damascus and in the direct line of march of Philistines, Egyptians and Assyrians, when they wished to cross the Western Range from or to the coast. If then Megiddo lay on the site of Lejjun, no wonder it was so often a place of battle, and no wonder the Romans fortified a camp there, calling it *Ligio* or *Legio* — a name which has clung to it ever since.¹

¹ Moore (*Judges*, p. 47) thinks Tell el Mutasellim close by may have been the citadel of Megiddo.

Jenin.

A little to the south of Taanach, along the Jenin road, the traveller enters one of the principal recesses of Esdraelon, the one between Gilboa and the Samarian hills. This bay runs back into the hills for some 9 miles. Near the bottom of it lies Jenin, now the capital town of its district and a place with something like 3000 inhabitants. There are fine gardens north of the town, with a plentiful supply of sweet water. Apparently, Jenin represents En-gannim of the place-lists, belonging to the tribe of Issachar. It was a frontier town between Galilee and Samaria, unfortunately without any strength of position. Josephus calls it Gema or Ginæa, and describes a fight that occurred there between the Samaritans and some Galileans who were going up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. This story reminds us of a similar incident in the life of our Lord. Certain Samaritan villagers would not receive Him because His face was as though He were going up to the Holy City. This lack of courtesy so incensed James and John that they wanted to call down fire from heaven upon the inhospitable Samaritans. The main high road from Nazareth to Jerusalem ran through Jenin.

Along the north of the Gilboa range and running down to the Jordan Valley is another

recess of the Great Plain, the Vale of Jezreel, The Vale of Jezreel. which carries the bed of the Nahr Jalud. This vale is more like a passage into and out from the plain than a mere arm of it. Beginning on the north of Zerín, it runs with an average width of 2 miles and an average fall of 80 ft. per mile to the Beisan Plain, 10 miles away. At the head of the Nahr Jalud are the springs Ain Tubain and Ain Jalud. The former is out upon the plain and therefore too exposed to be the Well of Harod, Well of Harod. above which Gideon and his men were encamped. Ain Jalud on the other hand flows out from under a cliff at the foot of Gilboa, forming a pool 50 yards long, and tradition has rightly fixed upon it as the well in question.

A ride of forty minutes westward from Ain Jalud brings the traveller to Zerín, the ancient Jezreel,¹ standing on the last spur of the Gilboa Jezreel. mountains, where "a low sinking promontory" is thrown off to the north-west. The top of this promontory is 200 ft. above the plain and commands a magnificent view in every direction. The ancient vineyards of Jezreel lay probably to the east of the village, where now some rock-cut

¹ During the Middle Ages it was known as Stradela and Zarcin. The Crusaders refer to it under the name Parvum Gerinum.

winepresses are to be seen. The principal references to the town (in distinction from the vale and district of the same name) occur in the time of Ahab and Jezebel, who were drawn to the place by the beauty of its surroundings and by its suitability as a winter residence. It was also, like Samaria, within easy reach of the Phœnician cities with which Ahab entered into a close alliance. Here Ahab and Joram had their palace of ivory, and their extensive gardens. Not far from the palace stood the Tower, from which the watchman spied the approach of Jehu as he came driving up the vale. At Jezreel took place the brutal massacre, by Jehu's order, of all Ahab's house and of all his great men and familiar friends and priests, until none was left alive. The only later Scripture reference to the place is in Hosea i. 4, 11, where the name is used to awaken a sense of guilt and of impending Divine retribution in the minds of the people of Israel. The Fountain of Jezreel, mentioned as the camping-place of Israel before the disastrous battle of Gilboa, is either Ain el Meiyteh close to the town on the east, or, more likely, Ain Jalud, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east-north-east, at the base of Gilboa.

Another important recess of Esdraelon runs

in between Tell Shadud (Sarid) and el Fuleh for a distance of some 12 miles. Up to the neighbourhood of Tabor, its width is from 3 to 4 miles. This bay derives its principal interest from the fact that Jebel el Tôr (1843 ft.) or Mount Tabor, "an immemorial fortress," ^{Tabor.} abruptly projects into it for more than 2 miles. Tabor was the rendezvous of Barak's army before the fight with Sisera. Probably the muster actually took place at the village of Deburieh, in the glen below the mount. Josephus refers to a garrison of young men, at this same village of Dabaritta, which kept guard in the Great ^{Dabaritta.} Plain. In one of the Psalms, Tabor and Hermon are coupled together as rejoicing in the name of Jehovah, and Jeremiah (referring to the Egyptian king) says, "As I live, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts, surely like Tabor among the mountains and like Carmel by the sea, so shall he come." The stronghold on the summit dates at least from B.C. 218, when Antiôchus the Great took it. Probably it was in existence considerably earlier. In B.C. 55, Tabor was the scene of a battle between the Romans under Gabinius and the Jews under Alexander, son of Aristobulus, in which 10,000 Jews were slain. Josephus fortified the town on the summit, building a wall round the whole plateau.

A strong Christian tradition dating from the fourth century makes Tabor the scene of our Lord's Transfiguration. It was probably natural that this event should become connected with the most conspicuous mountain of Galilee, and as early as the sixth century three churches had been built to commemorate the three tabernacles which Peter proposed to erect. But at this particular period Tabor was covered with houses, and therefore could not correctly be described as 'apart' (Matt. xvii. 1). Then again, just before His Transfiguration, Jesus was far away from Tabor, in the neighbourhood of Hermon. Stanley speaks of Tabor as furnishing the rare sight in Eastern scenery of a hill with foliage up to the summit. It is one of the few places west of the Jordan where the oak grows as a forest tree.

The battles
of the
Plain.

Any account of the Great Plain which made no reference to its principal battles would be incomplete and unsatisfactory. These battles are at least four in number, and afford instructive examples of the general geographical accuracy of the O.T. narratives.

1. In the period of the Judges, Canaanites were still masters of Esdraelon, and their settlements in the plain cut off Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali in the north from Manasseh,

Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah in the south. Consequently, when they gathered themselves together under Sisera to strike another blow for supremacy, the need was for some one who would rally and unite *all* the tribes of Israel. Happily, the need was met. Deborah, a prophetess of martial spirit, whose home was between Ramah and Bethel, in the hill-country of Ephraim, called the whole nation to arms, sending her appeal not only to the southern tribes but also to the northern, and ordering Barak of Kedesh-Naphtali to place himself at the head of the united forces. Barak rose to the call and mustered the northern troops in the glen below Tabor, by the village of Deburieh. The southern army, called together by Deborah, may have crossed over to join the main body at Tabor, or may have delivered its attack from the southern edge of the plain. Sisera's forces lay encamped at Harosheth, near the Kishon gorge, at the western end of the plain. On the day of battle, when Sisera had drawn out his lines of chariots and foot-soldiers, Barak gave the word of command to his men, and down they swept upon the enemy in an impetuous charge. A violent storm seems to have burst from the north in the face of the Canaanites, impeding their movements, and giving extra confidence

Battle of
the Kishon.

to the Israelites. Kishon being in full flood, the plain quickly became useless for chariots. The Canaanite lines were broken and the whole army driven back. The flight seems to have been both westward to the pass of the Kishon, where the greatest loss of life was suffered by slaughter and by drowning, and eastward toward Bethshan and the Jordan fords. Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Heber the Kenite, which was pitched seemingly on the plateau overlooking the Lake, by the oak or terebinth of Bezaananim near Kedesh.¹ Here he met a violent death at the hands of Jael, Heber's wife.

2. After Joshua's death, there were two principal difficulties in the way of Israel's complete conquest of Western Palestine. One was the want of union among the tribes. The other was the frequent inrush of Arabs from the east. The campaign against Sisera did much to remove the first difficulty. It brought the tribes together and broke the back of the Canaanite power. But the time had not yet come for undisturbed possession of the land. Midianites, Amalekites and other children of the east continued to sweep in periodically, destroying harvests and carrying off cattle.

Gideon's
campaign
against the
Midianites.

¹ This Kedesh may be the present Kadish, above the Lake, a little north of Kerak.

Forty years and more after Barak's great victory "Israel was brought very low because of Midian." But the Israelites cried unto the Lord, and, in response to their supplication, Gideon was raised up to oppose the invaders and bring deliverance to the nation. We read that "Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early and pitched beside the spring of Harod; and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh, in the valley." This fixes Gideon's camp at the west end of Gilboa, not far above Jezreel, and that of Midian on the opposite side of the vale, somewhere in the vicinity of Shunem. Immediately below the Israelite camp flows the stream which rises from the Spring of Harod (Ain Jalud). "The deep bed and soft banks (of this stream) constitute a formidable ditch in front of the position on Gilboa, and render it possible for the defenders of the latter to hold the spring at their feet in face of an enemy on the plain." Gideon decided upon a night march across the valley and a sudden surprise of the Arab soldiery, in the hope of creating a panic. With three hundred men, chosen by the device of the water-drinking, he stole across the vale under cover of darkness and surrounded the enemy's camp.

His men carried lamps concealed in earthen vessels and horns slung round their necks. When the word was given, "they blew the horns, broke the pitchers, flashed their lights and shouted, 'The sword! for Jehovah and Gideon!' But no sword was needed. Cumbered by their tents and cattle, the Midianites, as in several other instances of Arab warfare, fell into a panic, drew upon each other, and finally fled."¹ The course of their flight is given, in the narrative, as past Beth-Shittah [the modern Shutta, about half-way down the Vale of Jezreel on its northern side] towards Zererah, near Bethshan, as far as the lip of Abelmeholah [perhaps Ain Helweh, 9½ miles south of Bethshan].

Saul's
campaign
against the
Philistines.

3. The third important campaign of Esdraelon is the conflict of Saul with the Philistines (narrated in 1 Sam. xxvii.—xxxi.). Again the forces of Israel encamp on Gilboa, and again their enemies occupy the opposite hill of Moreh, not far from Shunem. It is difficult to follow the detailed movements of the opposing armies. The position of Aphek is unknown and the order of the narrative is uncertain. Saul may have followed up the Philistines into Esdraelon, whither they had probably come to secure their

¹ G. A. S., pp. 399, 400.

trade route to the east across the plain. This time the attack was delivered by the enemy. Moving round by way of Jezreel to the southern slopes of Gilboa, the Philistine troops appear to have attacked Saul's army on the heights of the ridge. Anyway, "the men of Israel fled before them and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa." Saul's sons were also slain, and the king himself, after being sore pressed in the fight, fell upon his sword and died. This defeat undid a large part of the earlier work of Saul's reign, and the Philistines regained for a time much of their lost ascendancy. Colonel Conder fixes upon the village of Fukua on Gilboa as the site of the Aphek of this campaign. Others place it at el Fuleh on the plain, not far from Shunem. Certainly, the narrative as it stands mentions Aphek as on the line of advance from Shunem to Gilboa. A third view, held firmly by authoritative writers,¹ assigns it to the Plain of Sharon at the mouth of one or other of the comparatively open passes into Esdraelon. It seems at least doubtful whether the account of *this* particular campaign demands the position in Sharon, however it be with the statement

Site of
Aphek.

¹ Robertson Smith, Wellhausen, Buhl and Dr. G. A. Smith agree in placing this Aphek in Sharon. The last-named writer thinks Kakon the most likely site. Buhl prefers Baka.

in 1 Sam. iv. 1 and the LXX reading of Josh. xii. 18.

4. The last of the four important campaigns of Esdraelon was undertaken by Josiah in the last year of his reign. Pharaoh Necho went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. As he crossed the Western Range, Josiah opposed him at Megiddo, fearing subjection to Egypt if the advance upon Assyria proved successful. At an early stage of the battle, which went against the men of Judah, Josiah was killed. His servants carried his body in a chariot to Jerusalem and afterwards buried it in the royal sepulchre.

Josiah
and the
Egyptians.

BOOK II

(continued)

WESTERN PALESTINE

II.—SAMARIA

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CHAPTER VII

THE PROVINCE AS A WHOLE, INCLUDING CARMEL

AS has already been explained, the Central <sup>Intro-
ductory.</sup> Range, extending from the Lebanons to the neighbourhood of the Red Sea, is broken into halves by the Plain of Esdraelon. The northern half, forming the hill-country of Galilee, has been described in the preceding chapters. The southern half, now to be considered, stretches away south of Esdraelon in an almost unbroken line for some 90 or 100 miles to Beersheba, where it sinks down into the Negeb or South country. Viewed from the sea or from the eastern hills, it appears to be a long mountain wall, with scarcely any break of continuity or sign of physical difference sufficient to suggest a division into provinces. Such physical difference, however, exists, and can be discovered on closer observation. More than one explorer has called attention to the scattered hills and upland

plains of Ephraim in their contrast with the high, compact tableland of Benjamin and Judah, further south. This distinction is sufficiently marked to afford partial explanation of the difference in history between the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and to suggest a reason for the later division into the provinces of Samaria and Judæa. The present chapter will deal with the district of scattered hills which, after the Disruption, became the seat of the Northern Kingdom, and later on the Province of Samaria.

Early associations.

Samaria contains some of the most fertile soil and beautiful scenery in Palestine. It is also crowded with historical associations. We read of Shechem long before Jerusalem. When Abraham journeyed from Haran and came into Canaan, he "passed through the land into the plain of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh." Thence he moved south to the neighbourhood of Bethel. A little later, Jacob when he returned from Paddan-aram, by way of Gilead, came in peace to the city of Shechem which is in the land of Canaan, and encamped before the city. He afterwards bought the parcel of ground on which his tents were spread and built there an altar, calling it El-elohe-Israel. His sons, at a somewhat later period, found good pasturage for their flocks in the Plain of

Dothan, where Joseph visited them to enquire after their welfare. Later still, when Israel had made its first rough conquest of Western Palestine, the interesting ceremony of inauguration was performed between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, in the very centre of this northern province. After burnt offerings and peace offerings had been sacrificed, Joshua stationed the tribes, half on the southern flanks of Ebal, half on the northern slopes of Gerizim, for the solemn reading of the Law, the blessing and the cursing, according to all that had been commanded by Moses, God's servant.

For two hundred years after the Disruption the Northern Kingdom was politically more powerful than the Southern and the chief centre of spiritual life. To this period belong Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea, who all ministered in the north. Elijah moved to and fro in this province, a strenuous, solitary figure, surrounded by mystery, unrelenting in his opposition to the worship of the Tyrian Baal and full of jealousy for the Lord God of hosts. The history of the fortunes of Israel, from Jeroboam I. to Hoshea son of Elah, is crowded with references to the plains and mountains and strong places of the province.

In N.T. times Samaria was one of the scenes

of John the Baptist's ministry of repentance. We find him baptizing in the neighbourhood of Aenon, near to Salim. Jacob's Well, where the woman of Samaria found Jesus resting, is just off the main road passing round the base of Gerizim into the vale of Shechem. No doubt the references to Samaria in the Gospels would be much more numerous but for the bitter feud that existed between Jews and Samaritans.

Hill-
country of
Ephraim.

The stretch of country which afterwards became Samaria was at first assigned to the tribes of Ephraim and West Manasseh.¹ Ephraim occupied the block of hill-country immediately north of Benjamin, extending from the neighbourhood of Bethel to the wady Kanah, with the portion of Manasseh on the north. This district became known as 'the Mount of Ephraim'—a title which was soon extended to cover the whole tract as far as the southern edge of Esdraelon. The valleys of this region were 'fat' valleys. The hills were open and fertile, contrasting with the more rugged and secluded uplands of Benjamin and Judah. Consequently the inhabitants always lay more exposed to foreign influences and invasion,

¹ The blessings pronounced upon the House of Joseph in Deut. xxxiii. are fertility of soil and invincible military strength.

Phœnician rites and customs gained an easier hold upon Israel than upon Judah, and both Syrians of Damascus and Assyrians from further east came first and most frequently and most easily upon the Northern Kingdom. Later on, the province lay open to the powerful Greco-Roman influences of Cæsarea and the Decapolis.

The north border of Samaria ran along the southern edge of Esdraelon. Sharon was the border-line on the west, while the river Jordan formed a sort of natural boundary on the east. The southern limit is less easy to determine, inasmuch as it changed with the changing fortunes of the inhabitants. Fixing it for the moment at the line of the wadies Deir Ballut, en Nimr and Samieh, the measurements of Samaria may be given roughly as 40 miles long by 35 miles broad—an area of about 1400 square miles, excluding Carmel.

The southern border just mentioned is the one determined by physical features, by the change from scattered hills to sustained table-land. To trace it more exactly, it runs from the seacoast along the Nahr el Aujeh and the wady Deir el Ballut as far as Kurawa Ibn Zeid. Then it turns south-east and winds along the wadies en Nimr and el Jib, till the water-parting is reached and crossed.

Boundaries
of the
province.

Southern
frontier.

Thence it descends first into the gorge of the wady Samieh and from that along the wady el Aujeh to the Jordan. This border-line, beginning a little north of Joppa and ending about 8 miles north of Jericho, was, for a brief period during the rule of the Maccabees, the political frontier between Samaria and Judæa. Up to this period, from the time of the Return, there had been no fixed border on the south. All dividing lines disappeared during the Captivity. Prior to the Exile, during the period of the rival Kingdoms, the boundary appears to have been generally the one from the Vale of Ajalon, across the plateau and down the wady Suweinit, to the Jordan at Jericho. This was a clearly defined line of crossing from the Maritime Plain to the Jordan Valley. It was a comparatively easy route for armies and trade caravans, and therefore frequently used, from the days of the Philistines to the later times of the Crusaders. After the Disruption, Bethel belonged mostly to Israel, and Geba formed the north limit of Judah and therefore the south limit of Samaria. "But though the vale of Ajalon and the gorge of Michmash form such a real division down both flanks of the plateau, the plateau itself stretches level from Jerusalem to the north of Bethel. Con-

sequently we find Judah and Israel pushing each other up and down on it, Israel trying to get footing south and Judah trying to get footing north of Michmash."¹ With the beginning of Roman authority, Samaria's southern boundary changed again. According to Josephus' statement, it must be drawn further north, along the wadies Deir Ballut, Ishar and Busharut, as far as Akrabbeh, whence it drops to the Jordan in the neighbourhood of Kurn Surtubeh. In the days of our Lord, Samaria appears to have extended from the edge of Esdraelon to the wadies Ishar and Farah, and from the Jordan to the edge of the Maritime Plain.

For purposes of description Samaria may be divided into two portions, the Northern and the Southern Hills. The Northern Hills lie between the south edge of Esdraelon and the line of the wadies esh Shair, el Ifjim and el Humr. From their centre, two short converging ranges run north till they join and become one at Jebel abu Madwar (1648 ft.), the second highest point of Jebel Fukua, as the Gilboa range is called locally. A little further north this group of hills curves boldly westward in the shape of a sickle and runs on for some 6 or 7 miles,

¹ G. A. S., p. 251, where a full history of this frontier is given.

Gilboa.

gradually falling, till, at Zerin, the height is only 400 ft. The northern and eastern slopes of Gilboa are steep; the western and south-western are more open and gradual. Three or four villages lie along the ridge, among them Fukua and Jelbon. The latter is said to contain a reminiscence of the ancient name 'Gilboa,' "most mournful word in all the military annals of the chosen Race." A few great events in Hebrew history are associated with these heights, particularly the victory of Gideon over the Midianites and the disastrous defeat of Saul at the hands of the Philistines, when "the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, the shield of Saul."

Lateral valleys.

South of this sickle-shaped ridge, begins "a distinct series of elevated valleys, sometimes on one side of the main water-parting, sometimes on the other and occasionally on both sides,"¹ running parallel with the main water-parting. These lateral valleys are characteristic of the Central Range as far south as below Hebron, and carry the main lines of communication between north and south. In addition to them, there are broad lower-lying plains between the ridges and summits, from which the outgoings to Sharon, Esdraelon and the Damieh ford of the Jordan are comparatively easy.

¹ Trelawney Saunders' *Introduction*, p. 219.

The wady esh Shair has just been mentioned as forming part of the southern border of this Northern Hill group. This wady represents the famous and beautiful Barley Vale, in which lie Shechem and Samaria. It was one of the fat valleys of Ephraim, at the head of which Isaiah saw the drunkards of Israel lying on a carpet of flowers and under a sky which tempted them to look for a perpetual summer. But they had overlooked God's righteous judgment upon their wrong-doing, and the storm suddenly breaks upon the valley, with its tempest of hail and of mighty waters overflowing their banks and covering with mire the crown of the pride of these insolent pleasure-seekers. This western outgoing of Ephraim formed the principal route from the seacoast and Maritime Plain to the cities, Samaria and Shechem. From the latter there was an easy continuation of the route eastward as far as the Jordan. A few miles north of the Barley Vale is the line of valley which carries the high road from Sharon to Jenin, part of which traverses the Sahel Arrabeh or Plain of Dothan, a frequent way for armies and caravans, from the days when Joseph's brethren lifted up their eyes and beheld a travelling company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, until now. The distance from Sharon to

The Barley
Vale.

Plain of
Dothan.

Jenin along this route is about 17 or 18 miles. This easy passage *viâ* Dothan into Esdraelon explains the frequent presence of Philistine and Egyptian armies in the Great Plain. All along the western flank of the Samarian hills, both Northern and Southern, the mountains descend gradually by a succession of comparatively easy steps upon Sharon, the general character of the slopes being 'rocky and sterile,' with occasional olive-yards, fields and villages.

The
western
slopes.

On the eastern flank of the Northern Hills, three principal valleys run down from the watershed to the Jordan. The southernmost of these is wady Farah, an important natural feature of the country. "Nowhere in Palestine had I seen such noble brooks of water," writes Dr. Robinson. In the spring-time it is covered with luxuriant herbage and flowers. The eastern trunk road runs down the whole length of the vale to the Damieh ford of the Jordan. Its north end lies in a wide semicircle of hills, with villages perched on their summits. Thence the main stream flows south-east between the ranges of Tammun on the north and Kebir on the south, until after a fall of 4 or 5 miles it has dropped down to sea-level. The total fall in these upper reaches is as much as 2240 ft. in 8½ miles. Along this flatter part of its course the

Wady
Farah.

water flows in a beautiful meadow, bright with oleanders. Lower down, the hills close in till they form precipitous cliffs on either bank. At one point the passage is reduced to a narrow gorge, "remarkable for its caverns and the colour of its rocks." The lowest part of the wady—the marshes of the Kurawa—is described by Van de Velde as "a well-watered and richly wooded oasis, with luxuriant fields and gardens and oleander-bordered brooks." In this beautiful and fertile plain, according to many explorers, lie the ruins of what was once the city of Archelaus.¹ Salome, sister of Herod the Great, to whom the king had bequeathed his own town of Phasaelis,² left it and Archelais to Julia, wife of Augustus. The district in which these two Herodian towns lay became "one of the most famous gardens of Syria, and its palm groves stretched till they met those of Jericho."

Archelais
and
Phasaelis.

The other two principal eastern valleys are wady el Maleh (the Salt Vale) and wady Khashneh, which carries the Roman road from Bethshan through Tirzah and Thebez to Shechem. Thus, in contrast with the west, the eastern flank of those Northern Hills presents a series of

Eastern
border.

¹ But see G. A. S., p. 354.

² Kh. Fasail, at the point where wady Ifjim comes out on to the Ghor.

valleys, with long ridges between, running down from the central plateau to the Valley of the Jordan.

Mount
Ebal.

The most prominent physical feature of Northern Samaria is Mount Ebal, rising to 3077 ft. above sea-level. From its highest point the view is one of the finest in the country, embracing pretty nearly the whole of the land. Ebal is dome-shaped, with its summit elongated north and south. Along the eastern base runs wady Beidan, a deep gorge which joins wady Farah further to the north. The Vale of Shechem, with Nablus lying in its narrowest part, separates Ebal from the neighbouring heights of Gerizim. A little to the east of Nablus, in the southern side of the mountain, is a recess forming a sort of natural amphitheatre. Almost opposite on the northern flank of Gerizim is a corresponding recess near Jamia el Amud. Probably it was in the great hollow thus formed between the mountains that the Ark of the Covenant stood, when the blessings and curses were solemnly rehearsed, after the first conquest of the land under Joshua. The air is so clear in this region that voices can be heard at very long distances, and there are few localities which afford such good facilities for the assembling of a great multitude to hear a public declaration.

In connection with the Northern Hills of Samaria, a brief description may be given of Mount Carmel, which we find coupled with Bashan several times in the O.T., probably because they stood in a similar relation to Samaria, one on either side, and were held by the kings of Israel in a similar kind of way. Asher, to whom the range was originally assigned, seems to have had no secure hold upon it. Though Carmel appears to be an offshoot of the Central Hills, and though it is built of the same hard limestone, it is in reality cut off by two groups of lower-lying softer hills which form the so-called Shephelah (or lowlands) of Israel. So that its almost detached ridge never formed any real part of Samaria. The southern boundary of the range is the line formed by the wadies Matabin and Milh. These two wadies separate Carmel proper from the 'lowlands' of Ephraim just referred to, which were always more or less debateable ground, like the greater 'lowlands' of Judah. This northern Shephelah consists of two blocks of hills: the Belad er Ruhah, bare chalk downs averaging 800 ft. in height, extending 8 miles from wady Matabin to wady Arah, and running out westward towards the sea in the projecting bastion of el Khashm,—and the

Mount
Carmel.

Sheik Iskander group built of hard crystalline limestone, with summits rising to 1600 ft., and bounded by the Plain of Arrabeh on the south.

In early times Carmel must have been well populated. All over the range are numerous remains of more or less ancient buildings, showing that almost every hillside, valley and plateau has been at one time or another inhabited. The soil is rich, and there are frequent traces of former olive-yards and vineyards. To-day, however, it is wild, uncultivated land (except round the small Druse villages of Esfia and ed Dalieh) covered in large part with a luxuriant undergrowth. In O.T. times Carmel ["the garden"] was famous for its beauty and fertility. Stanley describes it as less a mountain than 'an upland park.' The writer of the Song of Songs likens the head of his beloved to Carmel. Isaiah speaks of its "excellency." It stood out from the plain so solid a reality that it could be used as an image of the Egyptian king when he was a menace to the dwellers on the hills. "They cried there, 'Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is but a noise; he hath let the appointed time pass.' As I live, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts, surely like Tabor among the mountains and like Carmel by the sea, so shall he come."

. Its ancient aspect.

It was predicted that, when Israel should eventually return to his pasture, he should feed on Carmel and on Bashan, and his soul should be satisfied.

Through a long period of history this famous Carmel in range seems to have been a hiding-place for history. fugitives and a retreat for worshippers. Most of the high places in the country were first used by the Canaanites for the worship of Baal. When the Israelites became heirs of these places, they probably erected altars to Jehovah. Certainly this was what happened in the case of Carmel. Elijah used it as a place of retreat. Elisha also fled to its solitudes after his appointment to succeed Elijah. It was "Israel's farthest lodging-place, the forest of his fruitful field." The place of Elijah's memorable conflict with the priests of Baal is probably the spot at the eastern end called el Mahrakah (= 'the place of burning'). It is 1700 ft. high, commands a wonderful view, and is still used by Druses as a place of special annual sacrifice. Another tradition, with much less weight behind it, associates this scene, so vividly described 1 Kings xviii., with the promontory overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, where the Carmelite monastery, by which Christianity has sought to perpetuate the sanctity of the mountain, now

stands, 480 ft. above the sea. The 'head of Carmel' where Elijah waited for the rain may be the western headland. More likely it was a summit or high point nearer the eastern end.

Les
Destroits.

Round the headland of Carmel, where a beach of 200 yds. is left between sea and cliff, ran the famous Passage of the Sea, traversed by Richard the Lion-hearted and also by Napoleon on his retreat—"Carmel's haunted strand." South of Tell es Semakh the passage widens considerably. The Crusaders called part of it Les Destroits, 'the narrows,' a name which survives in Khurbet Dustrey, not far from Athlit. As a rule, however, this sea-way past Carmel was avoided by armies. It was narrow, rocky and easily defended by an enemy. The safer and easier passages from Sharon to Esdraelon ran across the lower hills between the south-east end of Carmel and the Samarian mountains. Here there is a choice of three comparatively open routes, the most frequented being that along the Valley of Dothan emerging at Jenin. The other two lie further north and enter Esdraelon at Megiddo (Lejjun) and Jokneam (Tell Keimun).

The
Southern
Hills.

The Southern Hills of Samaria start from wady Shair on the north and extend southward to

the line of wadies Deir Ballut, en Nimr and es Samieh. In this hill-group, the upland lateral valleys running north and south on either side of the water-parting are still to be found. One of these begins south of et Tawanik and continues for more than 5 miles to Mejd el beni Fadl. It probably formed part of the Acrabbene toparchy, which Josephus names as marking the southern limit of the province. On the west side of the watershed is the Plain of Mukhneh, running along the eastern base of Gerizim and well known to travellers between Jerusalem and Shechem. "The eastern extremity of this section displays a remarkable contrast in its natural features to the corresponding part on the north. The ranges of 12 miles in length with the fine open valleys, on the north, here give way to mere spurs and ravines corrugating the face of an abrupt slope of three or four miles in length and rising within that distance to about 2500 ft. above the depressed Ghor."¹ The principal valley on the east, down to the Jordan, is that formed by wadies Samieh and Aujeh. On the west, running down to the plain are wady Deir Ballut, and further north, wady Kanah, "the brook of Kanah" mentioned in Josh. xvi. 8 and xvii. 9 as the boundary-line

Brook of
Kanah.

¹ Trelawney Saunders' *Introduction*, p. 225.

between the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh. From Gerizim southwards the Central Range consolidates, and the mountains begin to reach greater heights, at the same time maintaining a much more even level along the watershed. Tell Asur, in the extreme south, rises to 3318 ft. Here probably was the Baal-Hazor "which is beside Ephraim," where Absalom had sheep-shearers, according to 2 Sam. xiii. 23.

Baal-
Hazor.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHIEF PLACES AND SITES

THE principal ways up to the central table-land of Samaria from the north are guarded at their entrances by Jenin, Jezreel and Bethshan. These three places lay on the extreme northern border of the province, while Geba, Dothan and Bethulia formed an inner line of defence for the approaches to the neighbourhood of Shechem and Samaria.

Bethshan or Bethshean (the modern Beisan), **Bethshan.** one of the most famous fortresses in Western Palestine, is mentioned in Joshua as a place which Manasseh possessed within the borders of Issachar, and from which the original inhabitants were not driven out. Here, and in fact all along the Vale of Jezreel, the Canaanites were strong, by reason of their chariots of iron—a fact which perhaps explains why so little is heard of Bethshan in the O.T. After the battle of Gilboa, the Philistines took the dead bodies

of Saul and his three sons, stripped and mutilated them, and then fastened them up to the walls of Bethshan. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, hearing of the shameful act, went by night, rescued the four bodies and brought them in peace to their own city, where they were buried under a tamarisk tree. Later on, David caused the remains to be exhumed and conveyed to Zela in Benjamin, where they were re-buried in the sepulchre of Kish, Saul's father.

The village and ruins of Beisan are just on the brow or bank where the Valley of Jezreel drops down 300 ft. to the level of the Ghor. At this point, the plain is 2 or 3 miles broad between the eastern end of Moreh on the north and the Gilboa heights on the south. The ravine of the Jalud is joined near the edge of the bank by another from the south-west, and between these two rises the tell or mound which once formed the citadel of Bethshan. The city cannot have had a circumference of much less than 2 or 3 miles, during its most prosperous period. It was splendidly situated, "in this vast area of plain and mountain, in the midst of abundant waters and of exuberant fertility," and, with such natural advantages, ought to have been one of the strongest defences of the west. As a matter of fact, it was nearly always in the

hands of enemies, and most frequently used as a base of attack upon the hill-country. The Jews seem only to have held secure possession of it during some thirty years of all its long history. In later times it was the largest city of the Decapolis and the only one situated on the west side of the Jordan. Vespasian used it as a point of concentration both against Galilee and Judæa.¹

Dothan the town (as distinct from the plain) Dothan.* was a strong place in the days of Elisha. The prophet was there, when the king of Syria sent horses and chariots and a great host to surround the place and (if possible) take him prisoner. In the Book of Judith, Dothan is several times mentioned in connection with the siege of Bethulia, under the form of Dothaim. It lies some 10 miles north of Samaria, on an ancient road, in a position which must always have been strategically important.

The position of Bethulia cannot be fixed with Bethulia. any certainty. It was on a hill near Dothan,

¹ In the Septuagint, 2nd Maccabees and Josephus, Bethshan appears as Scythopolis or *Σκυθῶν πόλις*, 'city of the Scythians.' Another name for it, found on the town's coins and in some classical writers, is Nysa. After the time of the Crusaders Bethshan became modified into the Arabic Beisan. The large ruined amphitheatre is one of the best specimens of Roman work in Western Palestine.

with springs in an adjoining valley. It may be either Meselieh or Meithalun, or the name may have been replaced by the present Sanur in the same neighbourhood. Bethulia is memorable as having guarded the passages of the hill-country against the forces of Holofernes, who is said to have been sent by Nebuchadrezzar to take vengeance on the western lands because they refused to come to his help against Arphaxed, king of the Medes.¹ It is also memorable as the native place of Judith, the rich young Jewess of the tribe of Simeon who assassinated Holofernes. The story of Judith's daring exploit may be read in the Apocryphal book called by her name. Geba mentioned in Jud. iii. 10 is the present village of Jeba, about 3 miles north of Samaria.

Geba of
Samaria.

The eastern passes of Samaria had no fortified places at their lower ends in the Jordan Plain. At their upper ends, however, they were guarded by Bezek, Tirzah, Thebez and Pirathon. It was at Bezek (Kh. Izbik) that Saul numbered his army before going to the aid of Jabesh-Gilead against Nahash, king of the Ammonites. Bezek guards the top of wady Khashneh and is on the high road from Shechem to Bethshan, about 13 miles from Shechem. It looks out across the Jordan Valley to the hills on the other side,

Bezek.

¹ Judith ii. 4. For the anachronism, see D. B., vol. ii. p. 402.

among which Jabesh-Gilead lies. This Bezek of Samaria must be distinguished from Bezek of Judah (now Bezkeh, 6 miles south-east of Lydda), the city of Adoni-bezek. Two miles nearer Shechem on the same high road to Beisan is Tirzah, probably the modern Teiasir and once Tirzah. capital city of Samaria.¹ The king of Tirzah was one of the thirty-and-one kings of the western land slain by Joshua and his soldiers. Later on, the place became the first capital of the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam, Baasha and the rest of the Israelite kings up to Omri made it their headquarters. Omri followed the example of his predecessors for six years, but at the end of that time removed his residence and court to the newly built stronghold of Samaria. In the Song of Songs, the lover addressing his beloved says, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners."

Still nearer to Shechem along the same road lay Thebez, now the village of Tubas, at the top Thebez. of the wady el Bukeia. After the capture of Shechem, Abimelech went to Thebez, encamped against it and took it. But as he was attempt-

¹ Dr. G. A. Smith, though he places Tirzah at Teiasir on his map of Samaria, thinks Talluzah, on a hill to the north of Ebal, a better site for it. This is also the choice of Robinson and Van de Velde.

Pirathon.

ing to set fire to the door of its tower, a certain woman cast an upper millstone on his head and broke his skull. Dr. G. A. Smith thinks some fortress must have covered the top of wady Farah, and suggests that Pirathon be placed there. We know that it lay in the territory of Ephraim, in the so-called hill-country of the Amalekites.¹ Colonel Conder places it at Feron, due west of Samaria, on the borders of Sharon. Pirathon appears as the burial-place of the judge Abdon, son of Hillel, who judged Israel eight years, in succession to Elon the Zebulonite. This important route from Shechem to Bethshan, past the top of wady Farah and on through Thebez, Tirzah and Bezek, was very much used in O.T. times, as well as later on, after the Romans had constructed a firm roadway along the whole course of it.

Aenon.

Near the eastern border of Samaria lie Ainun and Salim, probably the Aenon and Salim of John iii. 23. If Salim be the latter village, just to the east of Askar (the N.T. Sychar), Aenon will be the former, about 7

¹ The true home of Amalek was between Sinai and the southern border of Palestine. In the time of the Judges, an offshoot of the main stock had secured a settlement in Mount Ephraim. Some of their brethren had also recently settled in the hill-country of Judah.

miles further north, where the abundant headwaters of the Farah spring up. There is no good reason to assume that John was baptizing in Judæa. Ainun was a central situation, easily approachable from north, east and south, and therefore a good centre for a ministry such as that of John.

But more important than any of the places so far mentioned are Shechem and Samaria, both lying in the Barley Vale. The site of Shechem (now Nablus) is one of the best in the Shechem. country for beauty and luxuriance. The town is situated in the narrowest part of the vale, where it is only some 150 yards wide, and stretches out in a long line on the bottom of the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. Water seems to flow everywhere. Orchards and vegetable gardens are specially luxuriant on the lower slopes of Gerizim. The Samaritan quarter of the town is in the south-west. Here dwell the latest survivors of the old sect, numbering about 160. The men wear white surplices and red turbans. The office of high priest is hereditary, and the holder of it is president of the community, as well as one of the district authorities. Their synagogue is a small whitewashed chamber, the pavement of which, covered with matting, must not be

trodden with shoes. Very few have ever been allowed to see the oldest Samaritan codex of the Pentateuch. The one usually shown to visitors dates only from about 1450 A.D. "Of the MSS. that have reached Europe, none are older than the tenth century." The Samaritan Pentateuch itself is probably not older than the fourth century B.C., though a much greater age is claimed for it by the members of the sect. "The Samaritans are a fine race, above the average of Orientals in stature and possessing a beauty of feature and complexion very like the best type of South European Jews."

Historical
associa-
tions.

The earliest scriptural associations of Shechem are with Abraham and Jacob. Abraham arrived here on his first entry into the land, and Jacob bought a parcel of ground, a little to the east of the city, from the sons of Hamor. To Shechem Joseph's brethren had gone, when he was sent after them for news of their welfare. Later on, Joshua made the place one of the cities of refuge on the west of the Jordan. Here too the aged leader gathered together all the tribes of Israel with the elders, judges and officers, and solemnly called upon them to choose the service of Jehovah, putting away from them the gods their fathers had served beyond the river and in Egypt. In the chapter which records this

solemn scene, we are also told that the bones of Joseph were buried in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought. Shechem was the birthplace of Abimelech, son of Gideon by a Canaanite woman, who after his father's death slew all his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, except Jotham, the youngest. Jotham contrived to escape, and from the top of Gerizim lifted up his voice to the Shechemites in the familiar parable of the trees. After Abimelech had been prince over Israel three years, God sent an evil spirit between him and the men of Shechem, so that there were troubles in the city. Eventually, Abimelech, who seems to have been living elsewhere, probably at Arumah, retook Shechem, slew all the people who were in it, beat down the walls and sowed the ground with salt.¹ This was the end of Canaanite Shechem. The place was rebuilt later on and gradually increased in importance till, in the days of Rehoboam, it was prominent enough to be the scene of the famous conference

¹ In the story of Abimelech (*Judg.* ix.), Beth-Millo was probably a town not far from Shechem. Beer, to which Jotham fled, may be el Bireh, north of Jerusalem. The tower of Shechem seems to have stood outside the walls and at some distance away. The temple of El-Berith (*ver.* 46) was probably the same as the one referred to in *ver.* 4 as that of Baal-Berith, the city's principal deity.

between the tribes which resulted in the Disruption. Jeroboam i. strengthened the city, making it his place of residence, before Tirzah became the acknowledged capital. In the very much later time of Josephus, Shechem was called Flavia Neapolis, to commemorate its restoration by Titus Flavianus Vespasian. This foreign title has survived in the modern name Nablus, which is simply a corruption of Neapolis.

Jacob's
Well.

Half an hour's walk along the vale from Shechem eastward brings the traveller to the scene of our Lord's memorable interview with the Samaritan woman, Jacob's Well. It is described as situated close by Sychar, "near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." Probably we have the history of this plot of land in Gen. xxxiii. 19, xlviii. 22 and Josh. xxiv. 32. Sychar has been regarded as identical with Shechem, but no good reason for the identification can be given. There is much stronger evidence for Askar, a small village $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles east-north-east of Shechem, at the foot of Ebal and about half a mile north of the well. The road by which Jesus and His disciples probably travelled, after leaving the well, runs past this village and along the eastern flank of Ebal. John of Wurzburg (1160–1170) says, "Sichem is to-day called Neapolis.

Sicar is east of Sichem, near to the field which Jacob gave to his son, wherein is the well of Jacob, at which place a church is now being built." It is easy to understand a Samaritan woman, whether she belonged to Shechem or to Sychar, passing many streams and fountains in order to draw water from such a famous well. A vaulted chamber, the roof of which has fallen in, covers the well proper, which has a narrow neck opening out into a wider space below. Originally the depth was much greater than it is at present, large quantities of débris having fallen in from time to time. The uncertain and generally scanty water-supply appears to be due to percolation and rainfall. Jacob probably wished to make sure of water, even when the adjacent supplies were in the hands of unfriendly neighbours. The rich plain around would be a fine pasture-ground for his flocks. Jewish, Samaritan, Moslem and Christian traditions all agree concerning this memorable N.T. site. .

Even more interesting historically than Ebal is its companion mountain on the south, Gerizim Mount
Gerizim. (Jebel et Tor), whose summit (2849 ft.) forms a broad, bare, rocky plateau, extending roughly north and south. Near the highest point is the spot where the Samaritans encamp for their annual celebration of the Passover, where also

they sacrifice the seven white lambs, in accordance with O.T. ritual. At the south-east corner of the summit, the place is pointed out where Abraham was about to offer up his son Isaac, when the angel stopped him. Another tradition fixes this scene on Mount Moriah at Jerusalem, which afterwards became the site of Solomon's Temple. In Gen. xxii. no particular mountain is named, the only indication of locality being the phrase 'land of Moriah,' about which nothing certain is known. Stanley argues eloquently for Gerizim, while Josephus, following the Jewish tradition, which is at least as trustworthy as the Samaritan, places the offering on Moriah. Jotham may have spoken his parable, standing on one of the limestone cliffs that project from the quarries in the north precipice of Gerizim and overlook the plain in which Shechem lies. Gerizim is certainly one of the very oldest shrines in Palestine. It has been a place of divine worship from the days of Abraham until now. About 432 B.C. the Samaritans erected their famous temple on the mountain, as a rival of the more venerable sanctuary at Jerusalem.

Passing away from Shechem westwards along the Barley Vale, the stronghold which eventually gave its name to the whole province is soon

reached. "The head of Ephraim is Samaria." *Samaria.* Shechem, though favourably situated for a place of residence, was indefensible as a fortress, and therefore ill fitted to be a capital city. Accordingly we find Omri, after reigning six years at Tirzah, casting his eyes in the direction of the site which afterwards became Samaria. He bought the hill of Shemer for two talents of silver and built a city on it which he called Shomeron ("watch tower") or Samaria. This place continued to be the capital of Israel, till it was captured by Sargon of Babylon in 722 B.C., after a three years' siege. The fortress stood on a round, isolated hill, about 330 ft. above the plain, where the Barley Vale makes a bend and is joined by a valley from the north-east. On three sides the hill is closed in by mountains. Westward, the prospect is open away to the sea, and access to the coast is easy. Though Samaria "would now be commanded from the northern range, it must before the invention of gunpowder have been almost impregnable." Consequently, though besieged again and again, it could as a rule only be reduced by starving out the defenders. Two main roads run close by—one from Shechem to the north, passing beneath the hill on the east; the other from Shechem to the plain, along the

wady Shair. The position of this famous stronghold combines, in a remarkable degree, strength, beauty and fertility.

History of
Samaria.

Samaria is frequently mentioned in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, most frequently perhaps in connection with the doings of Ahab and Jezebel. Its pavements often ran red with the blood of the slain. Here Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, and Jehu all the priests of Baal. In the days of Jeremiah, the prophets of Samaria and of the kingdom in general had an evil reputation. "I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal, and caused my people Israel to err," saith the Lord. When this fortress was made capital of the Greek province of Coelesyria, we read that the Samaritans rose, in 331 B.C., against Andromachus, the governor chosen by Alexander, and burnt him alive. Alexander, blazing with wrath, hurried to avenge the murder of his general. Samaria was taken, the murderers were put to death under torture and the town was filled with Macedonians. Twice after this, it was attacked and dismantled, before its memorable destruction by John Hyrcanus, in 120 B.C. Hyrcanus carried on the siege with great energy, because he was highly displeased with the Samaritans for the injuries they had done to the people of

Marissa, a colony of Jews. The besieged, though reduced to the greatest distress by reason of famine, held out for a whole year. Hyrcanus at length prevailed, and so utterly demolished the stronghold as to leave no trace that there had ever been such a place in existence. After being rebuilt by Gabinius, Samaria was given by Augustus to Herod the Great. Herod strengthened and embellished it, calling it Sebaste (the Greek for 'Augusta'), after the emperor whose favour he desired to retain. Probably at this period it overflowed from the hill on to the plain below and around. "Herod settled in it a number of veterans, and used it also as a recruiting-ground for mercenary troops;"¹ so that henceforward its population contained a large admixture of foreigners. There are remains to be seen now of Herod's colonnade, which appears to have surrounded the entire hill, in a circumference of some 6000 ft. We are told in Acts viii. that Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to the inhabitants the Christ. The multitudes gave heed to the things that were spoken by him, so that there was much joy in the city. It is claimed that John the Baptist was executed here. His tomb is pointed out to the traveller side by side

¹ G. A. S., p. 348.

with the tombs of Elisha and Obadiah. The ancient name 'Sebaste' has become the modern 'Sebastieh.'

Places
among the
Southern
Hills.

The Southern Hills of Samaria are perhaps scarcely so rich in places of historic interest as the Northern, yet they contain several biblical sites. Among these are Ophrah (Ferata), on or near the road from Shechem to Joppa, Timnath-Heres (Kefr Haris), Gilgal (Jiljilia), Korea (Kuriyat), Shiloh (Seilun) and Lebonah (el Lubban).

Ophrah of
Gideon.

There are two Ophrahs mentioned in the O.T.,—Ophrah of Benjamin, which will be described later, and Ophrah of the Abiezrites, the birth-place of Gideon. The latter is probably Ferata, 6 miles west of Shechem. We read in Judg. vi. that "the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite." Gideon, Joash's son, was busy beating out wheat in the winepress,¹ to hide it from the Midianites. Him the angel called to deliver Israel from the hand of the

¹ The threshing-floors were always in an exposed place, where a man could hardly beat out sheaves of wheat unobserved. Gideon therefore preferred the winepress—a square or oblong excavation in the surface rock, in which the grapes were pressed by the feet, and from which the juice ran along channels, cut through the side, into two deeper vats alongside.

oppressor, promising that he should be empowered to smite Midian as one man. Later on, when the victory had been won, Gideon made an ephod¹ of the golden earrings presented to him out of the spoil, and put it in Ophrah, where his body was afterwards buried, in the sepulchre of his father Joash. Here also Abimelech slew his brethren, the sons of Gideon, three score and ten persons, on one stone.

The other places, named above as among these Southern Hills, lie south of the wady Kanah and more in the centre of the province. According to Judg. ii. 9, Joshua was buried in the border of his inheritance at Timnath-Heres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. This place, called also Timnath-Serah, had been given by the Israelites to Joshua, to be his own possession. Guérin believed the large tomb at Tibneh, on the Roman road between Jerusalem and Antipatris, to be that of Joshua. This was also the belief in Jerome's time; but tradition, both Samaritan and (in part) Christian, points to Kefr Haris, 9 miles further north, and 10 miles south-west

Timnath-
Heres.

¹ In some passages, "ephod" denotes a priestly garment of white linen. In others, it appears to describe some sort of image or idol, or (as some think) a portable object that was used by the priest in consulting an oracle.

of Shechem. Three sacred places are shown there, the tombs of Nun, Joshua and Caleb. If one of these be the tomb of Joshua, it is one of the very oldest buildings in Syria.

Gilgal of
Elijah.

The Gilgal of Elijah lies in this central southern half of the province. In the heart of the hills and a few miles north of Bethel, is the village of Jiljilia, on a hilltop, with a well to the south and a few olives close by. This seems to be the place, Gilgal, where a school of the prophets existed, whence also Elijah set out, accompanied by Elisha, on his last journey, when he turned his face eastward towards the land across the Jordan, from which he had first come forth¹ to do the bidding of God among the people of Israel. To this same Gilgal Elisha afterwards came, when there was a dearth in the land, and healed the mess of pottage by casting in a handful of meal. To reach Bethel from Gilgal, it was necessary to descend into the wady el Jib, which will account for the expression concerning Elijah that "he went *down* to Bethel." Otherwise Bethel is some 400 ft.

¹ An element of mystery attaches to the whole history of Elijah. There is no good reason to doubt that he was a native of the "wild but beautiful mountain district of Gilead." The LXX renders 1 Kings xvii. 1 as "Elijah the Tishbite, from Thesbon of Gilead," making the word translated (in the R.V.) 'of the sojourners,' a proper noun and not a common.

higher than Gilgal. In this neighbourhood lay Korea, now Kuriyat, whither Alexander Korea and Alexandrium. came on his journey from Scythopolis to Jericho. Not far away also was the stronghold of Alexandrium, "fortified with the utmost magnificence and situated upon a high mountain." Frequent references to this fortress occur during the civil wars of the Jews, during the period of the Roman invasion and during the rule of the Herods. "If Kuriyat be Korea, Alexandrium, no resemblance of which name survives anywhere, may be the Mejd el Beni Fadl, from which a Roman road went down to Phasaelis, or Khurbet Bkt. el Kusr further south."¹

Of greater interest than any of these places is the ruined town of Seilun, about half-way between Gerizim and Bethel, not far from the highway between Jerusalem and Shechem. This is the undoubted site of ancient Shiloh, Shiloh. Israel's bright sanctuary. The locality of Shiloh is given in Judg. xxi. 19: "And they said, Behold, there is a feast of the Lord from year to year in Shiloh, which is on the north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the

¹ G. A. S., p. 353. Some place Korea at Kurawa, in the Jordan Valley, at the mouth of the wady Farah.

south of Lebonah.”¹ When Joshua’s work was partially accomplished, we are told that the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. Here Joshua appointed the territories of the seven tribes that were still without inheritance. Shiloh was the site of the Tabernacle for a long period, and a central shrine of Israel for nearly 400 years. It was the place of public assemblies, at any rate for the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. To Shiloh, Elkanah, husband of Hannah, went up from year to year to worship and to offer sacrifice to the Lord of hosts. Here Eli dwelt and Samuel ministered. Shiloh was the resting-place of the Ark, from the time when Joshua placed it there to the year of its capture by the Philistines.

Evidently, a terrible catastrophe happened to the town a little later, for Jeremiah several times uses its fate as a solemn warning of what may come to other places.² To the sinners of Judah he said, “Go ye now, saith the Lord, unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wicked-

¹ *Lebonah* is probably el Lubban, nearer the main road.

² Jer. vii. 12, 14, and xxvi. 6, 9.

ness of my people Israel." It may be that the Philistines completely destroyed the town soon after their capture of the Ark. Anyway, it passes out of history from this point, except as the dwelling-place, in Jeroboam's time, of the old prophet Ahijah. Shiloh lay in a retired though central position, on a mound at the north-east corner of an upland plain enclosed by high hills. Even now, in desolation, it is one of the few beautiful scenes in the land. At the back of the present village, on its north side, is a large terrace with rocky sides, in the shape of an irregular quadrangle, which was probably the site of the Tabernacle. Shiloh was never any good from a military point of view, however beautiful and however convenient for assemblies and for worship.

Further south still are two or three very important places which ought not to be omitted from any comprehensive survey of this part of the Western Range. Chief among these is Bethel, the modern Beitin, $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Bethel. Jerusalem. It stood high up (2880 ft.) on the watershed, near the top of a valley running down eastward 8 miles to Jericho. Its earlier name seems to have been Luz. Lying on the frontier between Samaria and Judæa and not far from the junction of main roads leading

north, south and west, it became an important stronghold, and the tides of battle frequently flowed around its walls. It is reckoned sometimes to Ephraim, sometimes to Benjamin, and seems to have changed hands frequently. After the Disruption, though Judah won it back once or twice, it was principally a sanctuary and fortress of Israel. In fact, it became the religious capital of the Northern Kingdom. Judah, of course, got possession of it again after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. But it was thenceforward regarded as a place that had become defiled, and Josiah in his zeal for reform completely demolished it. This was no doubt chiefly because Jeroboam I. had made it a centre of calf worship, himself going up to the altar for the purpose of offering sacrifice. At Bethel, Amos attacked Amaziah, the false priest of God, and foretold the destruction of the Israelite sanctuaries, the fall of Jeroboam II.'s house and the ultimate captivity of the people.¹

Its
historical
associa-
tions.

In very early times, Abraham came into the neighbourhood of Bethel from Shechem, pitching his tent east of the town between it

¹ In Amos' time, Bethel was probably not only a sanctuary of Israel, but also a market, with its periodical fairs as well as religious festivals.

and Ai, and building an altar to Jehovah. Jacob also paid a visit to the place, on his way to Haran, when he had his memorable vision of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Perhaps it is a stretch of imagination to see in the peculiar character of the rock formations on the north the starting-point of Jacob's dream, though as a matter of fact the country around the village is "exceptionally stony and barren." God appeared to Jacob again at Bethel, on his return from Paddan-aram. It was on the occasion of this second visit that Rebekah's nurse Deborah died, and was buried "below Bethel under the oak."

The place lay directly in the path of Joshua's advance upon the highlands of Western Palestine, and so was one of the first cities to fall before his victorious army. Samuel judged Israel here, in the course of his yearly round. From Ramah he used to go on circuit between Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh, to which places the people from the surrounding parts came for the settlement of their disputes and to seek advice. We find Elijah at Bethel on his last journey, and later on Elisha also. After the fall of Samaria, the king of Assyria allowed one of the deported priests to return and dwell in Bethel, so that the new settlers from the east might be taught how

rightly to fear the Lord. Bethel is never mentioned in the N.T.

Ai or Hai. Often coupled with Bethel, as a kind of dependency, is Ai or Hai. The limits and principal features of the district within which its site must be sought are fixed by the narratives in Josh. vii. and viii. It lay in the wady Suweinit, not far from the top, a few miles east of Bethel. There was a valley on its north side, another to the west large enough to conceal a company of 5000 men, and a plain in front (to the south and east) over which Israel was pursued by the inhabitants. Sir Charles Wilson and others have fixed upon et Tell as the most likely site—a mound $1\frac{3}{8}$ miles to the east-south-east of Bethel. Conder, Henderson and others prefer Kh. Haiyan, $2\frac{1}{8}$ miles south-east of Bethel, and on the road thence to the Jordan Valley. When Joshua decided to advance upon the interior of the hill-country, from his headquarters at Gilgal, he naturally turned up the wadies Kelt and Suweinit. Near the head of the latter, he came upon the Canaanitish stronghold of Ai. His own encampment on the north of the city, the concealment of the ambush in the valley on the west, the feigned flight of the main army in the

early morning down the valley in front, so as to draw off the enemy from the walls and allow the ambushade to effect an entrance, and the subsequent slaughter of the inhabitants and destruction of the city, are vividly described in the narrative. Joshua's spoiling of this hill-fortress became memorable in the annals of Israelitish warfare. Ai is called Aiath in Isa. x. 28, where it is mentioned as one of the stages in the march of the Assyrian invader up the wady Suweinit and on towards Jerusalem. It is also called Aija in Neh. xi. 31, where the re-settlement of Benjamites, after the Return, in their old territory, is recorded. Josephus calls the place Aina.

Ephraim the city (in distinction from the ^{Ephraim} district) is mentioned along with Bethel and Jeshanah, and lay not far from Baal-Hazor, where Absalom had his band of sheep-shearers. It may be et Taiyibeh, 4 miles north-east of Bethel and 14 miles from Jerusalem. Not far from this town Abijah addressed Jeroboam and his army before the battle which ended so disastrously for the men of the Northern Kingdom. Ephraim is one of the few places in this whole region mentioned in the Gospels. We read in John xi. 54

that Jesus "walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there he tarried with his disciples." Jeshanah (Ain Sinia), Bethel and Ephraim seem to have formed a sort of trilateral of strong places for the defence of Judæa on the north. Ephraim is probably the same as the Ophrah of 1 Sam. xiii. 17, in the direction of which Philistine spoilers made a raid from the camp at Michmash, at the time of the conflict with Saul.¹

About 4 miles due east of Bethel is Rimmon, a moderate-sized village with cisterns and caves, evidently an ancient site. It is most likely the Rock Rimmon which furnished a safe retreat and place of sojourn for the 600 Benjamites after the events recorded in Judg. xx., until peace was restored between them and the rest of the tribes.²

Rock
Rimmon.

¹ The Gate of Ephraim, broken down by Joash, king of Israel, when fighting against Amaziah of Judah, was one of the gates of Jerusalem, on the north-west. The Wood or Forest of Ephraim, where a great battle was fought between the forces of David and the followers of Absalom, lay somewhere on the east of the Jordan not far from Mahanaim in Gilead.

² The Rimmono with her suburbs given to the Levites out of Zebulun is probably Rummaneh, south of Buttauf, in Lower Galilee. Rimmon-Perez, one of the camping stations of Israel in the desert, has not yet been identified.

Gophna, the Ophni of Josh. xviii. 24, must Gophna. probably be identified with the modern Jufna, 3 miles north-west of Bethel. To this place Judas Maccabeus fled with the remnant of his army, after his defeat in the neighbourhood of Bethsur at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is mentioned also in connection with the advances of Vespasian and of Titus upon Jerusalem. Through Gophna ran one of the main roads to Cæsarea and the cities of the Maritime Plain, perhaps the one along which Paul was conveyed to the famous city by the sea.

APPENDIX ON "THE SAMARITANS"

We read in 2 Kings xvii. 22, 23, that "the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them, until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he spake by the hand of all his servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria." This took place in 722 B.C., when the history of the Northern Kingdom, which had had its seat in the province of Samaria, came to an end. To replace the Israelites whom he had carried away, the Assyrian king "brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avva, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria," where they settled down among the remnant of

the Israelitish population. This gradual settlement of foreigners in the Samaritan cities and villages, with the consequent intermarriages, caused the new *Samaritans*, as they were called, to be of mixed race and to follow a worship of Jehovah that had become degraded by a large intermixture of heathen practices. They "feared the Lord," and at the same time "served their graven images."

In 586 B.C. came the downfall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, followed by the deportation of the Judæans to Babylon. When the exiles returned in 522 and the following years, the Samaritans sought permission to join them in the rebuilding of the Temple and in the re-establishment of a central and purified worship of Jehovah. Their overtures, however, were rejected by Jeshua and Zerubbabel, and this was the beginning of what developed later on into a complete estrangement. The Samaritans were regarded by the Jewish leaders as "a mixed people of doubtful orthodoxy." The final breach came in 432, when a priest, expelled from Jerusalem because he would not be separated from his Samaritan wife, who happened to be a daughter of Sanballat, took refuge among his wife's people. Henceforward the Samaritans became the declared adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. A few years later, they built and dedicated to the worship of Jehovah a Temple of their own, on Mount Gerizim, to take the place of the older Temple on Moriah, from which they had been firmly excluded. It may have been this Jewish priest (apparently Manasseh by name) who carried to Samaria the copy of the Pentateuch upon which the Samaritans afterwards rested their religious beliefs and based all their religious practices. They claimed all through to be regularly descended from

the twelve tribes and to observe the orthodox religion of Moses.

Thus arose that bitter rivalry which caused Jews to have no dealings with Samaritans, and Samaritans to have no dealings with Jews, alike in Palestine and in their scattered places of sojourn in almost every country of the world. In spite, however, of this mutual distrust and dislike, when the nation could no longer endure the Roman yoke, Jews and Samaritans joined together to drive out the common enemy. After the overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, they shared alike in the wide dispersion which took place, but had separate synagogues in the great cities of Egypt, Italy and other parts of the Empire. After 529 A.D., when the unsuccessful rise against Justinian occurred, Europe heard little of the Samaritans till the sixteenth century, when it was discovered that during the Middle Ages they had come to possess a considerable Arabic literature, and had very faithfully preserved their Scriptures. The present members of the sect form a very small community, with its headquarters at Nablus.

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PALESTINE

as divided among the
TWELVE TRIBES.

Scale 1:3000000

10 20 30 40 Stat. Miles.

 Cities of Refuge.

 Other Levitical Cities.



PALESTINE

in the Beginning of the
CHRISTIAN ERA.

Scale 1:3000000 (48 Sq. M. 1 in.)

0 10 20 30 40 50 Roman Miles.

• Cities of the Decapolis



The Kingdom of JERUSALEM

Shewing the Fiefs.
About 1187 AD.

Scale; 1:3,000,000

0 10 20 30 40 Sta.m.



Reference

1. Domaine Royal
2. Acre.
3. Arsuf.
4. Barut.
5. Bessan.
6. Caesarea.
7. Caymont.
8. Cayphas.
9. Darum.
10. Galilee.
11. Japhe & Ascalon.
12. Maron.
13. Montfort.
14. Naples.
15. Outre Jourdain.
16. Sagette (Salette).
17. S. Abraham.
18. S. George of La.
19. Suheto beyne.
20. Toron.
21. Tyre.

MODERN / PALESTINE

Shewing
TURKISH PROVINCES.

Scale: 1:3,000,000.

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Reference

The Vilayet of Syria includes the following Mudaserrikhs.

Esk Sham:

El Hauran;

Akka;
37-44-

*Nabais with El Belka,
El Kud:*

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